

DYNAMIC



**Choirs
Ontario**

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear friends of Choirs Ontario,

Autumn has come and gone, and we move towards winter with shorter days and colder temperatures. Many of you will have had your first concerts of the season by now and are busily preparing for the holiday concerts that December is sure to bring. As President of Choirs Ontario, I wish you all well in your preparations, knowing that in our collective song we contribute to making our world a better place.

At Choirs Ontario, the summer and fall has been one of transition. Dr. Elaine Choi has moved from her role as President of Choirs Ontario to Past-President. I want to thank Elaine here for her remarkable service to Choirs Ontario and I look forward to continuing to work with her as our roles change. In late August, Elena Koneva, Managing Director of Choirs Ontario announced her resignation to pursue other activities. Elena left the position on September 30. I thank Elena for her years of excellent work at the administrative helm of Choirs Ontario. In this interim period a team of individuals including members of the Choirs Ontario board, Eileen Baldwin, and Linda Beaupré have stepped into the breach to continue to keep operations running on a day to day basis. My sincere thanks to all who have stepped in, in myriad ways.

Very best wishes,
Dr. Mark Vuorinen, President
Choirs Ontario

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Hello, colleagues,

It's been a whirlwind of a fall and here we are smack in the middle of holiday concerts! I hope it has been a rewarding few months of great music-making for you and the choirs you sing with, support, and conduct.

In this issue you will meet Laura Curtis, the author of our new student column. Laura shares with us her perspective on the many benefits of the student memberships offered by organizations such as Choirs Ontario. In addition, you'll get caught up on news from our choir friends in Niagara, Hamilton, Mississauga, Kingston, and Cobourg.

Looking ahead, don't forget to mark your calendars for our upcoming submission deadlines. Articles for our winter publication are welcome before February 15 and the deadline for the spring publication is May 15. You can find all of the submission requirements on our website: <https://choirsontario.org/dynamic/>

Thank you for your continued support of Dynamic and all the best for the great music-making to come!

Cheers,
Mark Ramsay



Mark Ramsay, editor

WHY STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS?

by *Laura Curtis*

As my inbox becomes cluttered with invitations to renew my student memberships to multiple music education, vocal pedagogy, and choral associations this fall, I'm compelled, as a graduate student in music education, to consider the importance of my connection to these networks. In 2015, during the final year of my undergraduate degree, it was suggested to me by one of my professors that I (as well as my peers in our vocal and choral methods classes) should consider purchasing a student membership to one or two music education and/or choral associations.

Although I had been teaching private voice and piano lessons for eleven years at that time, I had never associated myself professionally with any organization other than the Royal Conservatory of Music (and this, I must admit, only for the purpose of registering my students for practical and theory exams). As I was in the process of applying to masters programs in 2015, and because my passion for

choral and vocal pedagogy had been both sparked and renewed during my undergraduate degree, I decided to investigate the benefits of student memberships for a number of different associations in North America.

The associations I chose to look into at that time included the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) and Choral Canada. Each of these national associations offered access to its own academic/professional journal, a multitude of professional development and networking opportunities, and a number of helpful academic, professional, and community resources. Given my newly acquired interest in vocal health and pedagogy research, journal access was a big selling feature for me. I was excited to have the opportunity to not only read about others' research, but to also have the option to send my own papers in for consideration for publication, even as a student. Conference opportunities were also high on

my priority list when researching membership possibilities, as I was interested in engaging with others' research in person within the fields of music education, music performance, and choral pedagogy. The opportunities presented to me on both the NATS and Choral Canada websites, as well as through discussions with my professors, proved enticing enough for me to purchase (at a greatly discounted fee) a student membership to both associations.

Admittedly, I have invested myself a lot more deeply with Choral Canada than with NATS. Probably due to the fact that it is a Canadian association and because traveling to conferences within Canada is most accessible for me personally. Since becoming a member of Choral Canada, I have also become a voluntary member of the Choral Canada Advocacy Committee and am involved with the Student Chapter. I cannot convey strongly enough how much my membership with Choral Canada has enriched my professional and academic life! In addition to NATS and Choral Canada, I have also become a member of the Ontario Music Educator's Association (OMEA), the International Society for Music Educators (ISME), the American Choral Director's Association (ACDA), the Kodály Society of Ontario (KSO), the Kodály Society of Canada (KSC), and, of course, Choirs Ontario. Each of these organizations offers its own benefits, including opportunities to attend and present at national and international conferences and symposia, essay writing competitions, professional development workshops and courses, and re-

search publication opportunities. Most importantly, the networking opportunities that have presented themselves to me as a student member of these associations, at conferences in particular, have without a doubt benefitted my academic and professional aspirations. They have also brought me a great deal of social satisfaction. Through my attendance at conferences, workshops, and courses, as well as my involvement with

committees, I have met fellow students, choral directors, music educators, composers, performers, and administrators from all over the world who have touched my life in a multitude of meaningful ways.

The support, encouragement, and sense of community I feel from my peers and colleagues, both within and beyond my field of study, continually reminds me of the impor-

tance of forging connections. I cannot emphasize enough the ways in which, over the last four years, I have been helped along my academic and professional journey by colleagues and peers I would not have otherwise met, had it not been for my affiliation with provincial, national, and international music associations.

Laura Curtis is a Doctoral student in the Music Education program at Western University, a private piano, voice and theory instructor, and Music Director of the Addison Women's Choir.



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A REQUIEM FOR ALL: STRATA VOCAL ENSEMBLE PRESENTS THE CANADIAN PREMIERE OF STEPHANIE MARTIN'S *Requiem for All Souls*

by Barbara Hampson



« *Stephanie's voice-leading is extraordinary! I see and hear twisty, mountain paths in her voice parts,* » says Laurel Forshaw, Strata Vocal Ensemble Conductor, of Martin's *Requiem for All Souls*.

Strata Vocal Ensemble is thrilled to have performed the Canadian premiere (November 24, 2019) of this beautiful work by Canadian composer and conductor Stephanie Martin, which was commissioned by All Souls' Church in San Diego, California, and premiered on All Souls' Day, November 2, 2017.

TEXT IS KEY

Martin's 25-minute a cappella *Requiem for All Souls* is set to the traditional Latin text of the Requiem Mass. Ruben Valenzuela, Director of Music at All Souls' Church, describes the Requiem as a work of pure, beautiful vocal music grounded in traditional church music.

In describing her composition, Martin says:

"I'm influenced by everything I experience. I've had the good fortune to sing, conduct, or play many great Requiems over the years. Big orchestral set-

tings by Verdi, Mozart, Faure, Duruflé, Britten, and the simpler, a cappella settings by Victoria, Howells, and of course the Gregorian chant setting. The common element I gleaned from all these composers was a real appreciation for the meaning of the words, and words are always my best guide in creating music.”

“I absolutely love how Stephanie’s compositions serve the text, rather than the text serving the music,” says Forshaw. “Her use of irregular phrase lengths and use of time to create space (aural and tonal) focusses the ear on the text, the meaning of the text, and allows the singers to move freely through the text because of the skillful setting. To my ear, the text setting is almost conversational in feeling—it is natural and possesses an organic quality that comes from a composer who understands the voice and text in a profound way.”

A CAPPELLA SETTING

Why did Martin choose an a cappella setting? She explains:

“I had guest-conducted the Howells Requiem which is a gorgeous a cappella composition. I was definitely influenced by that—its uniquely human, expressive quality. A cappella music is pretty much in my blood. As a Mennonite who grew up with a cappella singing all around, as natural as breathing, and as an Anglican musician working at St Mary Magdalene’s, where the choral repertoire is predominantly a cappella music from the Renaissance period, I have always reveled in the sound of the unadorned human voice. It’s a texture that has infinite variety and can express the text so well.”

CHORDS OF COLOUR

Forshaw admires Martin’s approach to dissonances, the way she creates beautiful tonalities with skilled voice-leading:

“Stephanie leads the individual parts through these windy paths, where a stepwise turn by one or two voice parts, turning around a corner on the path, opens into a breathtaking vista. The most beautiful vistas are often the ones that catch us by surprise, perhaps augmented by their unexpected place-



Canadian composer and conductor Stephanie Martin is associate professor of music at York University’s School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design; director of Schola Magdalena (a women’s ensemble for chant, medieval and modern polyphony); conductor emeritus of Pax Christi Chorale; and past director of music at the historic church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Toronto.

ment along the pathway. For me, I appreciate when a composer surprises me with chords of colour.”

BEAUTIFUL, VERSATILE, AND ACCESSIBLE

What makes Martin’s Requiem so attractive for choirs? Says Martin:

“I very deliberately set some of the movements in a more challenging contrapuntal style, and some movements with a very straightforward cho-



Laurel Forshaw is conductor of Strata Vocal Ensemble, past artistic director of the Dulcisono Women's Choir, and founder and artistic director of the Rafiki Youth Choir. Laurel holds a Master of Arts in Music Education (Choral Conducting) and Kodaly and Orff-Schulwerk certification from the University of St. Thomas, Manitoba, and is currently a PhD candidate in Music Education at the University of Toronto.

Forshaw believes it is imperative that choral organizations seek to program new works, "to continually push the boundaries and expand the aural palette and horizons of ourselves and our audiences." Throughout her career, she has sought to champion Canadian works, particularly those written by women and equity-seeking groups:

"The process of working on a new work allows us, as an ensemble, to give thoughtful consideration to how we approach each and every aspect of the piece—there are fewer preconceived ideas of what the final performance should sound like, so it frees us to dig in and discover, uncover, and expose the integral musicality of the work. To work from the ground up, so to speak, allows the ensemble to value their own sound in a way that is different from working on established repertoire."

Adds Martin, "I'd be remiss if I didn't thank Ruben Valenzuela in California who commissioned this Requiem for his church choir in memory of their Priest. Without his vision and courage, this piece wouldn't exist."

rale-like homophonic style. I was thinking of choral organizations who perhaps have several different groups at different levels. I also thought some of the music, in an actual funeral service, could be congregational. I hope I created a really useful liturgical piece that gives conductors and choirs a chance to 'pick and choose' the movements that suit them. I can imagine some of the movements (like the "Kyrie" and "Pie Jesu") being used by congregations. They are very simple and easy to memorize. In fact, when I visited the Holy Land on a choir tour in March 2019, we were able to launch into the Kyrie quite spontaneously and sing it whenever we needed a meditative moment visiting awesome historical sites."

For more information on Strata Vocal Ensemble, visit:
www.stratavocalensemble.ca

CHORAL MOSAIC 2020

Announces Workshops for Community Singers

by David Ambrose



David Ambrose is an award-winning conductor, singer, and director. He has served as Artistic Director for Mississauga Festival Choir since 2006 and is the Artistic Director of the Choral Mosaic 2020 choral music festival.

The Choral Mosaic 2020 festival has just confirmed our first wave of workshops. These workshops will be led by top choral clinicians from across the country and are designed specifically for community choir singers, giving them a fantastic opportunity to gain new skills and insights.

THESE WORKSHOPS WILL INCLUDE:

- Singing Gospel with Dr. Karen Burke (York University and Toronto Mass Choir)
- Musical Collaborations with Indigenous Artists with Dr. Lori-Anne Dolloff (University of Toronto)
- Connecting Conductor and Singers Through Gestures with Dr. Jean Sebastian-Vallée (McGill University)
- Healthy Singing Technique for Choral Singers with Dr. Darryl Edwards (University of Toronto)
- Raising Voices: Music for Individuals with Dementia and Their Caregivers with Bob Anderson & Ruth Watkiss



Dr. Darryl Edwards



Dr. Jean Sebastian-Vallée



Dr. Karen Burke



Dr. Lori-Anne Dolloff



Bob Anderson



Ruth Watkiss

More workshops will be announced in the coming weeks.

Choral Mosaic runs from June 25–27, 2020 in Mississauga, Ontario. This brand-new music festival welcomes choirs of all skill levels from around the world to sing and learn together in an all-inclusive, collaborative and dynamic environment.

For more information, visit:

www.choralmosaic.com



Oriana Singers (2019); photo credit: Dave Archibald

ORIANA SINGERS OF NORTHUMBERLAND

50th Anniversary

by Rosemary McDonald



Oriana Singers (1979)

One evening in 1969, a small group gathered around the dining room table of Covert and Helen Massie at their farm east of Cobourg to sing some madrigals and early church music, for the simple pleasure of it. They had a wonderful time and agreed to assemble regularly. Thus, the mixed-voice choir Oriana Singers was born.

It was the group's great fortune that Beryl Maguire was one of those founding members. Her extensive musical background and penchant for detail quick-

ly moulded the group into a fine choir that, after a few months, received invitations to sing at church services and for other local organisations. During Beryl's 25-year tenure as Director, the choir grew in skill and repertoire, winning several competitions, including the City of Lincoln Challenge Trophy as best amateur chamber choir in Canada in the 1980 National Competitive Festival. In 1985, the choir earned the Fred Everett Memorial prize for Excellence in Choral Singing at the Toronto Kiwanis Festival.

Beryl Maguire, former director (1969–1995)



Oriana Singers (1985)

Following Beryl's retirement, Robert Grandy became Director. In 1997, he became the choir's accompanist, a position he continues to fill with unassuming excellence, dignity, and dedication. Randy Mills was Director during 1997–98, following which Marie Anderson assumed the role. Under her tutelage, the choir expanded its membership and repertoire. Collaborations took place with the Concert Band of Cobourg, La Jeunesse Girls Choir, and other groups. Works by Robert Grandy, Ruth Watson Henderson, and Mark Sirett were commissioned.

In 2007, Markus Howard became Artistic Director and encouraged the choir to explore new genres ranging from jazz, operetta, and gospel, to major works such as Handel's *Messiah* and Fauré's *Requi-*



L to R: Heather Stubbs, Past President, Lynn Janes, Artistic Director, Robert Grandy, Accompanist; photo credit: Ruth Wilkinson

em. The choir welcomed and valued the occasional participation of professional singers and groups who enriched the choir's presentations and offered audiences opportunities to hear outstanding singers in their own community.

The choir, now 65 strong, no longer fits around a dining room table and members come from as far as Prince Edward County and Ajax. Lynn Janes, who became Artistic Director in 2018, deftly guides and motivates the choir through challenging scores during its weekly rehearsals, and concerts. During 2019-20, the choir marks its 50th season of performance and is planning exciting presentations that will awaken memories and inspire new ones. Special guests, a new commission from Robert Grandy, and a celebratory event promise to delight both the membership and its supporters.

(photo credit:
Dave Archibald)

Rosemary McDonald is privileged to be a member of the choir's alto section. She is currently the choir's Marketing Coordinator.



Conducting for singers workshop

Tuesday, December 10

7:00 P.M. – 9:30 P.M.

Richmond Hill Presbyterian
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Time flies when you are making music:

by Diana McAdorey

CELEBRATING
30
 YEARS
 OF ROBERT
 COOPER WITH
 CHORUS
 NIAGARA

It thrills us to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Chorus Niagara Artistic Director Robert Cooper. Mr. Cooper's artistic leadership drives Chorus Niagara's pursuit of musical excellence and our continued success as a pillar of the arts in Niagara. We dedicate our 57th season to him and his ongoing musical legacy in the choral arts in Canada.

After 31 successful years bringing fine vocal and choral music to all of Canada as Executive Producer of Opera and Choral Music for CBC Radio Two, Mr. Cooper now pursues a full-time conducting schedule. One of Canada's

foremost choral musicians, Robert Cooper is also Artistic Director of the Orpheus Choir of Toronto and the Opera in Concert Chorus. He is formerly the Artistic Director of the Ontario Male Chorus. He taught for several years as a member of the Choral Department, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and has conducted the National Youth Choir of Canada, the Ontario Youth Choir (1979, 2007) and a Celebration of Canadian Choral Music at Carnegie Hall.

A superb choral trainer and conductor, Mr. Cooper has provided strong artistic mentoring to

young singers in the Toronto Mendelssohn Youth Choir and the Orpheus Choir Sidgwick Scholars Program, influencing over 2000 young adult singers. Besides his work with choirs, Mr. Cooper has worked over 100 operas and has conducted symphony orchestras in Halifax, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Orchestra London, opera companies in Victoria, Ottawa, and Winnipeg and Toronto Operetta Theatre and Opera in Concert. Mr. Cooper has also guest conducted several Canadian choirs, and guest engagements at Festival 500, Kathaumixw, Festival of the Sound, Stratford, Guelph and Algoma Festivals, and Thirteen Strings.

Acknowledged as an innovative programmer, Mr. Cooper has commissioned and premiered many new works by both Canadian and international composers. He prepared choruses for many international conductors including Helmuth Rilling, the late Sir David Willcocks, John Rutter, Sir Andrew Davis, Charles Dutoit, and the late Robert Shaw and Elmer Iseler. Having been a regular member of the jury for the international choral competition Let the Peoples Sing, he adjudicated the World Choral Games in Shaoxing, China (2010), Cincinnati, USA (2012) and in Tshwane, South Africa (2018). He served as President of both the Ontario Choral Federation and

the Association of Canadian Choral Conductors, sat on the Board of Directors of Chorus America, is currently on the Advisory Board of the International Federation of Choral Music and is a member of the World Choral Council. Awarded the St. Catharines' Trillium Arts Award for excellence in the arts, Robert Cooper is also the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from Brock University, the Order of Canada, Queen's Jubilee Medal for his significant contribution to the Canadian choral community, and a St. Catharines Arts Award.

Join us all season for celebration and surprises!



Robert Cooper,
Chorus Niagara Artistic Director

For more
information
on Chorus
Niagara, visit:

www.chorusniagara.org