

Blue Ridge Chorale



of Culpeper, Inc.

CHORALE NOTES

October, 2012

Fall/Winter Schedule

Concessions a Culpeper Air Fest (Culp Airport)	Sat, Oct 13
Holiday Marketplace (The Depot, Culpeper)	Sat, Nov 17
Caroling at Tree Lighting (The Depot, 6pm)	Sun, Nov 18
Community Thanksgiving (Culpeper Baptist)	Tues, Nov 20
Dedicated Concert at Boxwood Recovery Center	Wed, Dec 5
Concert Evening Out (Prince Michel Vineyards)	Fri, Dec 7
Concert Afternoon (Reynolds Mem., Sperryville)	Sun, Dec 9

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A Special Shopping Experience -

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(of Mannheim Steamroller, and more!)

Here's News: Christmas Shopping Can Be Fun! Second Annual Holiday Marketplace Nov 17th

Christmas shopping really **can** be fun! 🌿 It's fun to shop when the environment is comfortable



and supportive and there's a wide variety of goods available. 🌿 It's fun to shop when you can share the experience with friends and family, *and* can get your lunch and snacks on location. 🌿 It's fun to shop when you know your holiday budget is buying unique, high quality items while helping support local craftspeople, businesses, farms and vendors. 🌿 It's fun to shop when one shopping trip can provide all these benefits and when you know your shopping is supporting a true community resource: the Blue Ridge Chorale.

On Saturday, November 17th, the Chorale is sponsoring its Holiday Marketplace at The Depot in Culpeper, from 11:00 am-5:00 pm. We'll have up to 20 local artisan,

specialty, farm and food businesses there.

Products available will include: 🌿 Unique, original designs in handmade jewelry and scarves.

🌿 Fine china and home decorations. 🌿 A wide selection of beautiful handmade pottery and crafts, all from this area. 🌿 Delicious homemade cakes, sweet breads and pies, to take home

with you or to order for your holiday table. 🌿 Pretzel rolls, apple butter and baked goods.

🌿 Alpaca wool yarn and products. 🌿 Pampered Chef kitchenware. 🌿 A wide variety of textile

products. 🌿 Hand painted signs and decorations. 🌿 Handbags and jewelry. 🌿 Sumptuous sauce

and seasoning blends. 🌿 Naturally scented oils and creams. 🌿 and... much, much more!

Put some merriment into your shopping at the BRC Holiday Marketplace!

and... Join us for carol singing at the Culpeper Community Tree Lighting at the Depot in Culpeper! Sunday November 18th at 6:00 PM.



The Director's Corner - Carole Tomhave

Joyeux Noel!

Although we haven't even carved our jack-o-lanterns yet this year, on Mondays all thoughts and creativity for those in the Blue Ridge Chorale already focus on the Christmas season. We are hard at work preparing our repertoire, from the Baroque Messe de Minuit by Charpentier to a new arrangement of "Il Est Ne", crafted by Jackson Berkey, the keyboard player from Mannheim Steamroller.

At this point we can still get giggly attempting the nasal French vowels in "Pat-a-Pan", but we will sound just like Pepe LePew by concert time!

The centerpiece of our holiday concerts will be the Messe de Minuit. Historically, going to midnight mass on Christmas Eve has been an important French Christmas tradition, and it is still that way today for many families. Mass is

followed by a huge feast, called le Réveillon (from the verb réveiller, to wake up or to revive). Le Réveillon is a symbolic awakening to the meaning of Christ's birth and is the culinary high point of the season, which may be enjoyed at home or in a restaurant or café that is open all night. Each region in France has its own traditional Christmas menu, with dishes like goose, chicken, capon, turkey stuffed with chestnuts, oysters, and boudin blanc (similar to white pudding). The yule log, a chocolate cake covered with almonds, candies or even small presents, is the typical dessert.

The yule log is not the only tradition seen here in America that has its origin in France. Luminaries and mistletoe are also part of the French Christmas celebration. Le Pere Noel (Saint Nicholas) comes to bring candy and gifts to children, as in other parts of the world, but it is the tradition of Le Pere Fouettard (the Bogeyman), a man covered in coal marks and dressed in black, who spansks bad children, that evolved into the (now somewhat outdated) tradition of putting coal in the stockings of children who have been naughty instead of nice!

We hope that you have marked your calendars to come and hear the result of all our hard work, and we hope that the concert will be a gift to yourself during a very busy season: a couple of hours of warmth, candlelight and good cheer! See you then!

*Carole Tomhave
Music Director*



Latin Pronunciation: Somebody Must Be Wrong, Right? Well... No

I remember as a 12 year old being introduced to my first hint of Latin complexity. In my Church choir, we were singing “Angels We Have Heard on High,” and told to pronounce *excelsis* as if it were *x-chel-sis*. OK, we can do that. That same season, though, I went caroling with a group of friends from school, many of whom were Catholic (therefore, at least in my mind, Latin sophisticates) and we couldn’t agree on a pronunciation. We actually put it to a vote and it turned out to that “egg-shell-ses” was the popular choice among the eight of us. My best friend told me that was the way she was taught in her church. I liked the whimsical eggshell reference, so shrugged and filed the contradiction away as yet another strange thing about life.

When this issue came up in the Chorale’s singing Charpentier’s *Messe de Minuit*, it struck me as a great chance to finally tie up this loose end in my awareness from 50+ years back. So, I inexpertly attacked *Wikipedia*, pestered Carole with poorly framed questions, Googled in lots of directions and even asked my husband, who is somewhat of a linguist. I ended up with a stew of barely-comprehensible phonetic data. This is what I think the non-linguist’s answer boils down to.

Even after it stopped being a widely-spoken popular language, Latin pronunciation continued changing because of church use over the centuries and across continents. The world-wide spread of rites and rituals performed in Latin caused it to be slanted in many different ways. While linguists embrace the evolution and fluidity of language, this posed a problem for ecclesiastical purposes, where the variety of pronunciations became confusing at best. In 1903, Pope Pius X issued a *Motu Proprio*, a document created directly in response to his interest, directing the use of the Roman pronunciation of liturgical Latin throughout the Catholic Church, and thereby unifying Latin pronunciation in services. The Roman pattern was carried forward in a series of academic works and became the standard for Roman Catholic usage.

“Throughout the early music movement there has been consensus that the sound of the language is as important as the sound of the instruments. So for example, ensembles singing English Renaissance music will now sing Latin as it was pronounced in the period (e.g. Not the Italianate “ch” in “Coeli” but the same sound as “celestial”). Douglas Cowling on the Bach Cantatas, <http://www.bach-cantatas.com/Topics/Pronunciation-3.htm>

One example of the Roman pronunciation is *Glo’ria in exce’lsis*: *Gla’w-ree-ah een eh-kshe’hl-sees*. Those long-ago “eggshellses” were, just as my friend had said, correct church pronunciation.

But other considerations arise in performances. Many performers and choruses use the “Historically Informed Performance” model for authenticity in presenting early music and theater. This approach focuses, among other areas, on the *sound* as well as the *meaning* of lyrics, just as a cantata played on an instrument typical of Bach’s time will have a different feel from that played on a more modern instrument. “X-chel-sis” and “eh-kshe’hl-sees” have distinctly different tones.

When the Chorale performs the *Messe de Minuit* in December, we’ll be striving to sing it as Charpentier heard it in Paris in the late 1600’s. This is somewhat of a challenge, but it sure feels right!

Sources: Wikipedia: “Ecclesiastical Latin,” “Latin Regional Pronunciation,” “Historically Informed Performance”
<http://www.siue.edu/MUSIC/CHOIR/LatinPronunciation.pdf>



This photo was taken in November of 2010, of the Chorale performing at the Culpeper Community Thanksgiving. We're happy to say that we'll be part of that wonderful event again this year. Come join us on Tuesday evening, November 20th at Culpeper Baptist Church!

Concerts, Events and Sing-a-longs: We Got Lots of 'em!



Saturday, Oct 13th, the Chorale will again sell refreshments at the Culpeper AirFest, Culpeper Regional Airport, in Brandy Station. The AirFest is a great event, and the forecast is for a sunny clear day in the mid-60s. More info at www.culpeperairport.com/airfest_info_2012.htm



Saturday, Nov 17th – Blue Ridge Chorale Holiday Marketplace at the Depot in Culpeper from 11-4. Admission is free. Come shop, and have fun!



Sunday, Nov 18th – The Chorale will sing at the Culpeper Community Tree Lighting at the Depot at 6:00 pm. Come and sing along. Everyone is invited to take part in this annual community event!



Tuesday, Nov 20th – The Chorale will sing at the Culpeper Community Thanksgiving at Culpeper Baptist Church at 7:00 pm. Come and sing along. Selections from our *Sing We Now of Christmas* concert will be featured. This is a lovely and meaningful community event.

Wednesday, Dec. 5th – This year the Chorale will perform its complimentary concert exclusively for the staff, residents and guests of the Boxwood Recovery Center, a program of Rappahannock Rapidan Community Services.

The Concerts

Sing We Now of Christmas Friday, Dec. 7th, 7:00 pm at Prince Michel Vineyards, on Rt 29 in Leon. This will be an “evening out” concert: hors d'oeuvres and soft beverages included, and wine available for purchase.

Sing We Now of Christmas Sunday, December 9th at 4:00 pm at Reynolds Memorial Baptist Church, on Rt 522 in Sperryville. The Culpeper Presbyterian Church Handbell Choir will perform with us!

Sing We Now of Christmas

Draws on traditional French *Chants de Noël*; some familiar and some less well-known. It will feature selections from the *Messe de Minuit pour Noël* of Baroque composer Marc Antoine Charpentier, an acclaimed and unique interpretation of *Il est ne le divin enfant (Born Is He, the Child Divine)* by Jackson Berkey of *Mannheim Steamroller* and much more! Local instrumentalists add the depth of drum, horns, violin, flute and bells.

Order tickets through our website: www.brcsings.com, or call 540-223-5462

Meet the Composer: Jackson Berkey



Jackson Berkey, who composed “Il est ne le divin enfant” (Born Is He, the Child Divine), one of the featured songs in our *Sing We Now of Christmas* concert, is an American composer, pianist and singer. He’s best known for his work with Mannheim Steamroller, which he co-founded with Chip Davis in 1974. Jackson recently celebrated 38 years with Mannheim Steamroller.

Berkey was educated in piano performance at Wilkes College and Juilliard School of Music. He made his professional debut at the Town Hall in New York City in 1969. Berkey’s early employment included pianist for the Norman Luboff Choir tour, where he met both Almeda, his future wife, and Chip Davis. Davis was experimenting with a new style of music, something he called “18th-century rock,” but the piano parts he was writing were well outside of his skill as a pianist. The two became fast friends, and the music they worked on

together would evolve into the album *Fresh Aire*, which they released under the pseudonym “Mannheim Steamroller.” This was a play on the phrase “Mannheim roller,” an ascending arpeggio named for the late 18th century Mannheim school of music. Over the next three decades, Mannheim Steamroller released over 30 different albums, including 11 albums of Christmas songs.

After Berkey and Almeda wed, she became the Director of Choral Activities at the University of Nebraska, and later directed Omaha's *Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum*. Berkey's first attempts at composition on his own were choral arrangements for his wife's choirs, which they worked on together. Many of Berkey's compositions are songs, cantatas, and other works for vocal ensembles of men, women, and mixed choirs. Currently, Berkey is composing a series of nocturnes that cover all 24 major and minor keys.

Berkey’s recordings beyond Mannheim Steamroller elicit rave reviews in the classical world. Berkey has a long association with the New York City classical scene, and in 2009 was named to the International Roster of Steinway Artists. Other awards and honors include the Nebraska Individual Artist Fellowship for Performing Arts Distinguished Achievement in Composition Award, First Prize in the New Music for Young Ensembles Composition Contest in New York City, First Prize at the Alienor Harpsichord Competition in Hilton Head (NC), annual ASCAP Awards, and award-winning video scores.

The Anniversary Carols

In 1991, Berkey began the practice of composing carols as wedding anniversary gifts for Almeda. Her choral group, *Soli Deo Gloria Cantorum*, has performed and recorded these Anniversary Carols, and they have gained wide popularity.

Most of the Anniversary Carols are compositions based in traditional carols, but with highly creative changes in areas such as rhythm and phrasing. In “Il est ne le divin enfant,” Berkey hearkens back to the original 6/8 meter Normandy hunting tune which has become softened over time through translation of the lyric, by structuring the setting to somewhat resemble Ravel’s *Bolero*.

“The traditional melodies and texts are all there...with a refreshing twist here, a piquant harmony there, a witty surprise where you least expect it.” John Rutter

From the liner notes, *Jackson Berkey’s Cantorum Christmas!*, SDG Records, 1998

Sources: Wikipedia, Jackson Berkey; http://www.berkey.com/Bios/Jackson_Berkey.html