



CHORALE NOTES

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New York, New York! It's a Wonderful Town!



*New York, New York, a wonderful town.
The Bronx is up, but the Battery's down.
The people ride in a hole in the groun'.
New York, New York, it's a wonderful town!*
- Opening number of *On the Town*

New York City is many things to many people, but for our Chorale this spring, it's our concert focus. There's a lot to sing about: the hopes of immigrants, the "city that never sleeps," the flash, dazzle and color of Broadway, the pain of the 9/11 attack, and the resilience, drive and strength of a bustling, vital city.

People often think of Manhattan when they think of New York City, but it's only a part of the City. The largest American city,

home to eight and a quarter million people,

New York City is made up of five boroughs: Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens and Staten Island; with Manhattan squarely in the center. Each Borough has a distinct identity and each is filled with neighborhoods which are distinct from each other. New York is a city of staggering diversity. It has drawn huge numbers of immigrants since the Dutch founded it in the 1600's. In 1980, twice as many Puerto Ricans lived in New York City as in San Juan: just as in the 1850s it housed more Irishmen than Dublin did!

But, Manhattan... an island 13.5 miles long and at the most 2.5 miles wide, Manhattan is in itself a universe of history, culture, art, commerce, entertainment. Over the decades, Manhattan has been or is home to Minsky's Burlesque, the Ziegfield Theater, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera, the Radio City Music Hall, the Wintergarden Theater and countless other icons of the growth of music and theatre in America.

Mark your calendars! Spring concerts will be Friday, April 26th at 7:00 pm at Open Door Baptist Church, Sunday, April 28th at Baptist Retirement Community at 4:00 pm, and Tuesday, May 7th at 7:00 pm at the State Theatre. We hope you'll come!



The Director's Corner

Some folks like to get away,
Take a holiday from the neighborhood.
Hop a flight to Miami Beach or to Hollywood.
But I'm takin' a Greyhound on the Hudson River line.
I'm in a New York state of mind.

You can fairly hear the strains of Billy Joel's song wafting around the ceiling at Open Door Baptist Church on Monday nights, as we sing the many faces of the island Manhattan! The room is filled with energy, first from our Youth Choir, the largest we've had in many seasons, and then from the (slightly) older singers, as we work to master Gershwin's jazz chords, the rhythms and cadences of "Do You Hear the People Sing" from *Les Miserables*, the poignant phrases of Rene Clausen's "Kyrie", which honors the memory of those lost in the attacks of 9/11, and much more.

Our concerts this spring will feature a lot of Broadway favorites, but they will also celebrate other faces of the city that houses "the Great White Way". However, my favorite aspect of NYC is one that we won't be singing about—her fabulous FOOD!!! I love to eat my way through New York. I still dream regularly of my last trip there, when we discovered the most amazing Italian restaurant just around the corner from the Museum of Modern Art (sorry, I can't remember the restaurant's name, but it starts with an "M"). I had never had mussels before that day, and now I have them any time I can find them, but still haven't found any that can match the ones I had there. Field trip, anyone?

My taste buds are somewhat pacified by knowing that the next Chorale snack night is coming soon - - the Blue Ridge Chorale boasts some amazing cooks and bakers! In between munches, we'll be rehearsing - - we intend to cook up a great night out for you, so plan to come to one of our performances in April, and then come again to our night at the newly-renovated State Theatre on Tuesday, May 7! Start spreadin' the news.....

Carole Tomhave

We're Busy Rehearsing!



This season, we have a large active choral group, totaling almost 50 singers! The adult Chorale is in great voice and the Youth Chorale is developing rhythm and starting on the songs. With this large group working on a lively program, we're having fun rehearsing!



Above: Rehearsing "America" from *West Side Story*. Right: Youth Chorale Director **Cathy ter Weele** guides the Youth Chorale in a Kodaly system exercise.

On Broadway! Part 1

West Side Story

West Side Story was inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, but the doomed romance is set in the 1950's turmoil of New York City's inner city racial and gang problems.

The Capulets and Montagues are transformed into street gangs whose members live in urban ghettos. The Jets are white youth whose families have become established in the neighborhood, while the Sharks are mostly newcomers of Puerto Rican background. The strains between these two groups are more than just racial and cultural, epitomizing the natural tension between existing and changing societies. As in *Romeo and Juliet*, Tony and Maria struggle to balance their loyalty to their friends and families with the love they feel for each other. Though Maria and Tony's love is tragically doomed, *West Side Story* ends with a tentative note of hope for the future of others in the ghettos.

Brigadoon

In this fantasy, a mysterious, ancient Scottish village appears out of the mist for only one day every 100 years. Two American tourists stumble upon the village, where one, Tommy, soon falls in love with the village lass, Fiona. For Tommy to stay with Fiona, he must give up everything from the present, and if Fiona leaves with Tommy, Brigadoon will vanish into the highland mist never to be seen again. The Lerner and Loewe score includes *Almost Like Being in Love*, *The Heather on the Hill* and *Go Home with Bonnie Jean*.



From the Dutch Apple Theater (Lancaster PA) production.

Some Little Things About Musicals

From Broadway to Hollywood - Many Broadway shows have been made into successful movies. Among them are: *Annie*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Brigadoon*, *Cabaret*, *Carousel*, *A Chorus Line*, *Evita*, *Grease*, *Guys and Dolls*, *Hairspray*, *Kismet*, *Les Miserables*, *The Music Man*, *Oklahoma*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Rent*, *Showboat*, *The Sound of Music*, *South Pacific*, *West Side Story* and more.

and... From Hollywood to Broadway - More than 60 Hollywood movies have been made into Broadway shows. These include: *White Christmas*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Mary Poppins*, *The Producers*, *The Lion King*, *9 to 5*, *Ghost*, *Xanadu*, *A Christmas Story*, *Footloose*, *The Goodbye Girl* and *Shrek*.

West Side Story

- When the *West Side Story* movie was being cast, Elvis Presley was approached to play Tony, but Col. Tom Parker turned the studio down, wanting Elvis to emphasize a more sentimental image in his movies. Troy Donahue, Marlon Brando, Dennis Hopper and Bobby Darin were also considered for Tony's role. Audrey Hepburn started out in the role of Maria, but dropped out when she became pregnant, and Natalie Wood took the role.

- Leonard Bernstein was also working on his musical *Candide* while composing *West Side Story*. The songs "One Hand, One Heart" and "Gee, Officer Krupke" were originally composed for *Candide*.

- The Prologue was first written as a huge chorus for the rival gangs with, as Bernstein put it, "millions of lyrics to insanely fast music." "...the lyrics were dropped in favor of pure dance... the only sounds the chorus produces in the opening 5 minutes are a whistle and ... fingers snapping."

Brigadoon

- Agnes de Mille choreographed *Brigadoon*, using authentic Scottish folk dance, including a traditional sword dance and a funeral dance.

- The show was very successful. The Broadway production opened in 1947 and ran for 581 performances. The London production ran for 685 performances. The movie (1954) was nominated for three Academy awards.

Words to Wonder About

Theater or Theatre?

Says *grammarist.com*: "In most contexts, there is no difference in meaning between **theater** and **theatre**. *Theater* is the preferred spelling in American English, and *theatre* is preferred virtually everywhere else. Some Americans do make distinctions, usually that a theater is a venue while theatre is an art form... These aren't (generally) consistent. The American preference for *theater* is a late-20th-century development (though the spelling itself is a centuries-old variant), so it is understandable that some people still resist it, and its newness means that exceptions are very easily found." In short, it's up to you which you use. Many Americans like using *theater* for a specific building or stage, and *theatre* for more abstract uses, so might say "The excellent performances at the theater on Main Street have really improved theatre in this town." Your mileage may vary. Enjoy!

"Wretched Refuse"

Emma Lazarus wrote the poem "The New Colossus" for an auction raising funds for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal. While the France's vision in donating the statue was celebrating the two countries' shared commitment to liberty, Lazarus' poem and efforts helped shift this focus to include welcome for immigrants to America. A determined fighter for immigrants' rights, Lazarus had the vision that the Statue of Liberty would welcome the "wretched refuse," the rejects of and escapees from, foreign societies, to a country which would let them re-invent themselves as dynamic, creative, productive, inventive and valued American citizens. As waves of immigrants have arrived in America and built their new lives, this image has been validated over and over.

Broadway, Off Broadway, Off-off Broadway

A **Broadway Theater** is one of 40 designated theaters seating over 500 and within the Theater District. **Off Broadway** means Manhattan theaters, Theatre District or not, seating 100 to 499. **Off-off Broadway** theaters seat under 100. Any of these may or may not actually be located on Broadway.

The Melting Pot



-New York started as a Dutch, then English, colony, but now an estimated 800 **languages** are spoken in New York City. It's the most linguistically diverse city in the world. -The New York metropolitan area contains the largest concentration of populations with **Arab and Middle Eastern** ancestry in the U.S., and the largest **Jewish** population outside of Israel. - In 2007, New York had the largest number of **African** immigrants in America. -Per the 2000 census, **Italian-Americans** make up the largest European ethnic group in New York City. -New York houses the largest **Romanian** community in North America. -Though New York had been a hub the slave trade for nearly 200 years, slavery there diminished after the Revolution and was abolished in New York State and City in 1827. New York City, though, maintained strong economic ties with the South because of its role financing and exporting cotton, and feelings for and against slavery were extremely strong in the City. Despite this, New York City became a very active Station of the Underground Railway, and many escaped slaves settled there. After the Civil War ended, migration to New York by former slaves and their families continued for many decades, and New York has the largest **African American** community of any city in the country. - **Russian Jews** and **Ukrainians** tended to settle in Brooklyn, especially the Brighton Beach area, which is called "Little Odessa." There you can see billboards and signage entirely in Russian. -New York City is home to 15% of all **Korean Americans** and the largest **Asian Indian** population in the Western Hemisphere. Along with those who have dispersed into the City, the six Chinatowns in New York city comprise the largest population of overseas **Chinese** outside of Asia.