



CHORALE NOTES

August, 2013

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Welcome Back!

It seems hard to think about Christmas music in August, but that's just what we're doing. Melissa Janes, our Director, has lined up a great program for us, Cathy ter Weele is getting ready for the Youth Chorale, and the Board is working on some new and very interesting concert opportunities and venues. Watch for more information. Since the excitement of our outstanding Spring season, we've had a bit of vacation and are ready to get back into it again - singing and preparing our Winter concerts. So, get ready for a fun season and meet us at Open Door Baptist on Monday, August 26th. We're going to have a great time! Let your friends know: we welcome new singers!

This is Going to Be Another Great Season!

We have a great program and exciting concert plans!

Our Fall/Winter season starts Monday, August 26th at 6:30 PM (be there at 6:15) at Open Door Baptist Church, with the Youth Chorale starting September 9th at 5:45 pm. We're lining up a great season and we hope you'll join us!

(Share the newsletter with them, too!).



Singing at the Courthouse on July 4th, 2013

The Culpeper Minute Men Chapter of the Virginia Society Sons of the American Revolution presents a celebration of the Declaration of Independence each July 4th at the Courthouse in Culpeper. And, the Chorale sings patriotic songs as part of the event. This July 4th was a beautiful day, the Chorale was in great voice, and it was, as always, a meaningful way to commemorate July 4th and what it's all about.

Thank you to Steve Miller for the July 4th photos!



The Director's Corner – by Melissa Janes

Hello to all BRC singers and supporters!

I am writing to you looking down the barrel of a new season and a great deal of new, exciting experiences for all of us.

It was my pleasure to accept the position as your director this past spring. Since I moved here from Michigan in 2008, BRC has been a musical home away from home, a place to connect with kindred spirits and enjoy the love of singing. Some of you I know, some of you I do not, but I have loved making music with you.

That being said, I am entering this season feeling the pressure. Teaching a full time high school choral position, running an at-request voice studio, staying current with professional musical experiences, and coming in after such a well-loved director means I have my work cut out for me. However, Blue Ridge Chorale has been on an upward climb of enthusiasm and energy over the past year and a half and I feel strongly that should continue.

This season, we will be exploring “The Gifts of Christmas”. Each song will fall into larger categories like “hope”, “joy”, “family”, and “food”, but in and of itself will be its own gift. Each one will have its own experience to share with us. Whether it's a song that's been on your list for a long time or one that you have to accept politely like a gift from your grandmother who thought “something practical” was just what you needed this year, all of the songs this season will have something to share. Just wait until you see what's under *our* Christmas tree!

To those who are returning this fall, I am so excited to work with you. For those who are on the fence, I offer this bit of encouragement. In addition to being a passionate, perfectionistic musician, I feel strongly that singing is for EVERYONE. Back in the day before MP3 players, and CD's, and records, and radio, the ONLY way for music to be in your life was if you made it yourself. Through recordings and TV talent searches, we have outsourced our music making and elevated people who have been deemed “worthy” enough for the task. However, in my life some of the most meaningful music I have ever heard has not been performed by these “worthy” few. It has been my mother singing me a lullaby or by my husband singing me a love song. Those are experiences everyone has a right to. As a director, I feel strongly about giving people back the right to sing to their children and loved ones and to feel confident doing so.

If you love singing, you have a place in the BRC community. Whether it's singing in the choir or humming along in the audience, we are a community of people who love to sing. I am excited to see where that love leads us this fall. See you all soon!



Chorale Summer Fundraiser

The Chorale's summer fundraising campaign ends Sept 1st. Please help us out by making your donation now. *What could your donation do?*

\$10 would cover a season's music purchase for one singer.

\$40 would cover the location expense of two rehearsals.

\$90 would cover the cost of safely storing our music library for a month.

\$200 would cover our professional staff costs for an off-season free concert, such as July 4th.

\$300 would cover the cost of a guest instrumentalist for one concert series.

We had a nice, shady spot on the Courthouse Lawn, and a good breeze!



Simonne and Cathy ter Weele.



What Does it Take to Sing in the Chorale?

Attendance- The Chorale rehearses every Monday evening (including holidays, in most cases) from the last Monday in August to the end of the season –the first or second weekend of December. Our Spring season starts the first Monday in January and ends early in May. Members are expected to attend all rehearsals if they can, and to limit missed rehearsals to no more than 2 each season. We arrive at 6:15 for regular rehearsals. Warm-ups begin at 6:30 and rehearsals to 8:30 pm. We meet at Open Door Baptist Church on Rt 3 (the Fredericksburg Road) in Culpeper, very close to the intersection of Rt 3 and Rt 29.

All active Chorale members are expected to participate in at least three Concerts: the free concert we perform in the community as well as our (usually 2) ticketed concerts. Concert dates are given to members within the first 6 weeks of the season.

Other Events - The Chorale usually sings at local community events 3-4 times each year. Two of these are singing at the Culpeper Community Tree Lighting, and at the Reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th. These are not “required” of Chorale singers, however they are great fun, are good for the Chorale and the community, and our singers enjoy them.

Cost to Join/Concert Clothes - The enrollment fee is \$35 each season to participate. Couples or families enrolling pay \$50, which is a real bargain. The Youth Chorale (ages 7 to about 14) costs \$10 per season, and can be covered under the Family membership.

Ladies do have the one-time cost of purchasing a uniform concert dress, with the uniform pearl necklace.

The dress currently costs \$70 and the pearls cost \$5. At times a departing singer will donate or sell her dress back to the Chorale and we sell these at a reduced cost.

Men are expected to wear a black suit, white shirt, black socks and shoes at concerts. Uniform bow ties are issued for each concert.

Communication and Culture – The Chorale has a relaxed, fun atmosphere and is very supportive of its singers. While rehearsals are work, they are also fun, and there is visiting time before and after rehearsals and at break. The Chorale uses email as much as possible to keep members informed between rehearsals. The Newsletter is published every other month. There also are announcements at rehearsals, and a printed season schedule is available about 3 weeks into each season.

How much Experience/Skill/Talent do I need to have? - The Chorale features singers of many levels of talent and experience. Blending these voices into a musical and pleasing concert is one of the Director’s primary skills. New singers at many levels are welcomed each season. If you love to sing, you’re likely to be well qualified for the Chorale.

Some of our singers can read a musical score, some can’t read one at all and many read music “sort of.” As your experience grows, you become more familiar with reading music. We all benefit from the CD’s with our section’s part which are issued in the first month .

Singing with the Blue Ridge Chorale is a lot of fun and is a great family activity. We hope you’ll join us!

Note from the Editor:

I have heard, many times, "I'd love to sing with the Chorale, but I don't have the voice." I know exactly what those feelings are, but would like to offer a bit of experience.

I know I'm not a particularly good singer, but I've always loved to sing. I've been singing in Chorale for seven years now. In that time, choral singing has become an important part of my life, offering me a wonderfully rich and supportive singing environment which I had been missing.

I came late to Chorale. As a child, I sang in church choirs, but after high school was on my own musically, and for (many!) decades contented myself with singing in the car, the shower and wherever I felt I wouldn't annoy anyone with my possibly off-key renditions. Seven years ago life handed me a big personal change, and I felt I needed to do something to kick-start myself. I started attending local choral rehearsals, and studiously avoided thinking about how my rusty voice might sound to anyone else. I was determined to ignore that rotten old question "Am I good enough?" and just jump in and see.

What a good decision that was! To my surprise, I was warmly welcomed into the world of Chorale and ever since have felt supported, accepted, and part of a wonderfully dynamic community. I've learned that most of us start off with similar anxieties. I've learned that every voice, when well directed, contributes to an amazing whole. I've learned that participating, as a singer and as a volunteer, is valued and has rewards all its own. And, I've experienced the wonderful power of a group engaged in song to the point where the joy of the music overrides everything else! I've learned and sung classic masterpieces, lovely and interesting popular music and even the fun of some just plain silly stuff. During the last two seasons, for instance, our endeavors ranged widely, from the plangent cry from the heart which is Rene Clausen's "Kyrie," to snappy (and rather tricky) Gershwin medleys, to "The Twelve Days After Christmas," (Frederick Silver) complete with pop-gun and rubber chicken.

And, for me, somewhere along this path, I found my singing voice. It's not the best voice in the world, nor the worst, but it's mine, and it's enough. Chorale is a wonderful experience, and I'm eagerly looking forward to our new season. The decision to sing with a chorale is one I recommend for anyone who loves singing, whatever your qualifications. You just won't know how it will be for you until you try. Join us and see!

From left - Back row: Dorothy Wright, Jack Garber, Charlie Pringle, Johnnie Carlson, Ralph Smith. Front row: Deb Thompson, Martha Smith, Nancy Miller.





Above, Melissa Janes, directing.
 To left - Back row: Simonne ter Weele, Cathy ter Weele
 Center row: Patti Christie, Wanda Osborn, Sue Ellen Johnson
 Front: Martha Smith.



From left:
 Alex ter Weele,
 Scott Tester,
 Alex ter Weele,
 Jack Garber,
 Charlie Pringle



How the Chorale Board Works

Like most organizations, the Blue Ridge Chorale relies on its Executive Board to keep things running. The Board is primarily made up of Chorale singers, though it can also include friends of the Chorale who are not singers. The Board meets 11 times during the year and has a wide range of responsibilities and activities. There are 11 volunteer Board positions, and the Music Director and Youth Director participate in Board meetings as well. Here's what we do:

The **Chorale Manager** (Dorothy Wright) is the primary "Go-To" person for rehearsals. She works with the active membership: encouraging satisfaction, morale, promptness, attendance, recruiting and retention, and professionalism within the Chorale. She's responsible for overseeing clean-up after rehearsals. Working with with Social Affairs, she staffs rehearsals and concerts (as needed) with volunteers to handle ticket sales, seating, observation, and manages registration, dress orders, attendance records, contact lists and enrollment information. She produces name tags, attendance sheets and contact rosters. She, or the Section Leader, follows up on any problems or concerns singers may be having. She works closely with the Director, the Youth Director, the VP: Social Affairs and the Section Leaders.

The **Concert/Production Manager** (Kathy Tester) implements the production aspects of concerts and rehearsals: assessment of performance venues, liaison with special accompanists or performers, arrangements for warm-up, ensuring that all staging and set-up requirements are met and serving as the Director's assistant at concerts. She chairs and directs the Production Committee. She works in particular with the Director, the Youth Director, the Chorale Manager and the President.

The **Corresponding Secretary** (Carolyn Osborne) sends out the Chorale's official correspondence, issues greeting cards on behalf of the Chorale and develops and publishes the Newsletter. She works with Fund Raising on fund raising correspondence, and coordinates with the Treasurer, the Chorale Manager and the President.

The **Librarian** (Diana Cmeyla) is responsible for seeing that every performing member as well as the



Braving July heat, members of the Minute Men Chapter presents a proud and colorful display of (really warm!) Revolutionary War apparel and offer the authentic sound of fifes and drums as well.

accompanist and guest performers gets the sheet music for each concert in a timely manner. With the Library volunteers, she is responsible for the maintenance of Chorale files and records and of cataloging and storage of BRC music and maintaining the database. She oversees the distribution of music to singers and return at concert end. She's the primary contact regarding all the contents of the Library and the storage unit.

The role of the **President** (Johncie Carlson) is overall management of Chorale affairs. She coordinates Chorale and Board activities. She sets agendas for and conducts Board meetings. She is the Chorale's primary representative in the community. She establishes and chairs ad hoc committees as needed. She's responsible for the Job Descriptions, By-Laws, staff performance reviews and contracts. She oversees standing committee and Board placements. The President works closely with Directors, the Board, the members, and area contacts.

The **Recording Secretary** (open position) is responsible for taking minutes at each Board meeting, presenting them for approval or correction prior to the next meeting, correcting, confirming and maintaining hard-copy files of minutes. The Recording Secretary works closely with the President. (continued on next page)

We currently have two positions open on the Chorale Board. If you'd like to promote the Blue Ridge Chorale's growth with your skills, contact us! We'd like to talk with you!



This summer, Cathy ter Weele, our Youth Director, completed the second of her three-level progression toward Certification in the Kodály Method through James Madison University. In these courses, Cathy is mastering techniques which she applies both in the classroom and the Blue Ridge Chorale's youth programs.

The Kodály Method emphasizes singing as basic to each child's musical development. Integrating folk songs, dancing, game-playing, improvisation, composition, and musical instruments, the Method develops overall musicianship, comprehension and love of music. Cathy has been directing the Youth Chorale for 7 years, working with children ages 7-14 on developing their singing and music appreciation. The Youth Chorale regularly performs as part the Blue Ridge Chorale's Concerts. Youth Chorale rehearsals will be held on Monday evenings from 5:45 to 6:15 at Open Door Church, starting on Sept 9th and ending in early December. New singers are welcome!

The **Treasurer** (Tim Carlson) records and deposits dues, donations, proceeds and other Chorale funds. He makes bill payments, conducts Chorale business with the bank, and provides quarterly financial reports to the Board as well as an annual summary at the members' annual business meeting. He helps plan, develop and implement the annual budget. He works with the entire Board and outside service providers.

The **VP: Fund Raising** (open position) is responsible for developing financial support for the Chorale through: fund raising events, management of donor contacts and coordinating solicitations, developing support and sponsorships in local businesses. Chairs and directs the Fund Raising Committee. Coordinates planning and activities with the Board.

The **VP: Programs** (Jack Garber) designs, assembles, edits and oversees the printing of programs, publicity materials and other printed items related to the Chorale's concerts, all within the Chorale budget. The Programs Chairman coordinates his work with the Music Director, Concert Manager, Publicity Chair, Chorale Manager and especially the President.

The **VP: Publicity** (Sasha Clark) is responsible for meeting the Chorale's mission through contacts with the media. She develops marketing and branding strategies, submitting these for Board approval and then overseeing the publicity aspect of their implementation. She establishes and maintains contacts in the local media and sends out regular postings each season for recruiting and concert publicity. She works with the President and the VP: Programs about developing publicity for concerts.

The **VP: Social Affairs** (Margie Blankenship) is responsible for maintaining a sense of community and comfort among Chorale members. She directs and

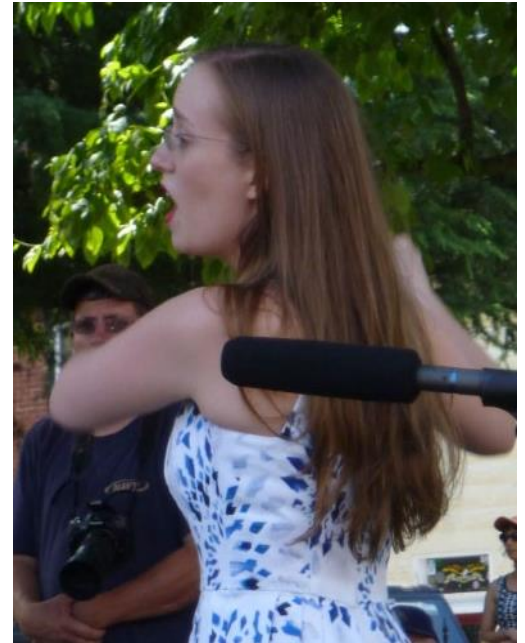
coordinates the Social Committee, which staffs the welcome table, taking registration forms, dress orders and dues payments. She ensures that information and necessary forms are made easily available to all members of the Chorale. She's the primary contact to the Board for Chorale social events such as covered dish dinners. She reviews concert venues with an eye to comfort and accessibility for the singers, and ensures that their needs are supported. She works especially closely with the Chorale Manager and with all the Board.

The **Music Director** (Melissa Janes) is responsible for the content, style and performance of the concerts, including designing the performance, selection of music, ordering music, writing program notes, preparation, and conducting rehearsals, and coordinating with the Accompanist. She works with the Chorale Manager to ensure good morale and professionalism among the singers. The Director works closely with all the Board.

The **Youth Director** (Cathy ter Weele) is responsible for recruiting, teaching and coaching young performers (ages 7-14) with the immediate goal of performing in Chorale Concerts and the long-term goal of growing their skills and enthusiasm for music and especially for choral singing. This includes designing the Youth section of each Concert in coordination with the Music Director: selecting appropriate music and ordering new music as needed, writing program notes, preparation, conducting rehearsals, and working with the Youth Accompanist. The Youth Director also conducts the Summer Youth Workshop, supported by Chorale volunteers, serves as the substitute for the Music Director and as needed directs non-concert performances such as caroling. She works closely with the Music Director and the Board.



The July 4th event was great, and, perfectly, the big Finale went off with a bang! On the dramatic last bar of “America the Beautiful,” the Chorale was in full voice as The Minute Man musketeers fired their salute, marking the end of this year’s event.



Singers, from left: Ralph Smith, Donna Pringle, Tim Carlson, Joyce Calhoun, Nellie Santinga. Accompanist Brittany Bache in front, with a very kind page-holding volunteer.