

CHORALE NOTES

October, 2013



| | |
|---|---------|
| Concert News/Quiz | p. 1 |
| Youth Chorale/Air Show/Raffle | p. 2 |
| Two Drinking Songs and a Hymn | pp. 3-5 |
| A Brief History of Christmas Music | p. 4 |
| Simple Gifts/ Quilt Drawing | p. 5 |
| It's All Good – Making the Most of Time | |
| Spent Online | p. 6 |
| Dvořák and “Going Home” | p. 7 |
| Thankful | p. 8 |

Concerts Are Coming Up!



It seems like just yesterday we were signing up for the season, but now our concerts are “around the corner.” Our 40 adult and 15 youth singers are hard at work learning, refining and tuning up our music. It’s going to be a wonderful concert! Reflecting the wide impact of the holiday season, *The Gifts of Christmas* will include many songs: some

familiar, some classical and some which will surprise and move you.



Top: Registration, not so long ago. Above: Altos and basses, and (above right) Sopranos, learning the new compositions.



Friday, November 22nd, 7:00 pm at Prince Michel Vineyard on Rt. 29 South, about 7 about miles from Culpeper – This will be an “evening out” concert: hors d’oeuvres will be included in the admission, wine will be available for purchase by the glass or the bottle, and the atmosphere will be elegant, warm and festive. Seating is limited and reservations are required. Admission is \$10.00 per person. Reserve early through our website, www.brcsings.com, or call 540-717-9023. This makes a great “date night!”

Sunday, December 1st, 3:00 pm at the State Theatre in

Culpeper. Bring your family for this afternoon concert! The recently re-opened and beautifully renovated Theatre offers very comfortable seating in a true classic theater environment, along with terrific acoustics! Tickets at the door: see the State Theatre website, www.culpepertheatre.org

On Monday, December 16th, at 7:00 pm, the Chorale will join with the Fauquier Community Band for *Holiday Voices Unite*, a combined concert, at the **Warrenton Community Center** (430 E. Shirley Ave. in Warrenton). See the Band website, www.fauquiercommunityband.com, for more details.

Which of these “facts” are true? Find out!

- * Gustav Holst was German. (p. 3)* “Going Home” is a traditional spiritual. (p. 6)* Christmas in the 1600’s was one big party. (p. 4)* Aaron Copland didn’t write “Simple Gifts.” (p. 5)* Antonín Dvořák was Russian. (p. 6)* “Wasting time” can be productive. (p. 7)
- * Ducks slobber a lot! (p. 3)

Join us at 5:30 pm on Sunday, November 24th at the Depot in Culpeper for the Culpeper Community Christmas Tree Lighting. The Chorale will perform, and lead sing-along of, familiar Christmas songs. This fun, relaxed family event is a great start to the season!



Director Melissa Janes, tuning fork in hand, explains a fine point of sound projection.

Order beautiful poinsettias for the holidays! P. 6

The Youth Chorale's Hard at Work, Too



Youth Chorale Director Cathy ter Weele builds teamwork, communication and rhythm, combining structured play with learning. With 15 children enrolled this season, the Youth Chorale has its largest membership to date. The Youth Chorale will perform in our concerts, singing several holiday selections.



Photo by Johncie Carlson

Singing in the Rain

Despite weather which could discourage all but the most intrepid junior aviator, our valiant Chorale volunteers worked hard on October 12th at the annual Culpeper Air Fest. They raised funds for the Chorale by selling lunch food, snacks, and raffle tickets while staying cheerful and musical, so everyone enjoyed the day! Thanks to all our wonderful helpers and their families who not only raised money for the Chorale, but raised everyone's spirits with their good nature! 🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋🦋

🌸 Christmas Songs: A Lot Can Happen in Six Centuries 🌸

Our wonderfully diverse Christmas program this year includes three pieces which date back at least to the 15th century. Two are drinking songs: “Bring Us in Good Ale,” (adapted by Gustav Holst in 1916) and “Deck the Halls,” which have undergone various degrees of change, while the third, “Gaudete,” is consistent to its original form, even being sung in Medieval Latin.

“Bring Us in Good Ale”

“Bring Us in Good Ale” is a Cornish drinking song thought to date back to the reign of Henry the Sixth (1422-1461). The text (below) of the song, which Holst adapted in 1916, is taken from *Victorian Songhunters: The Recovery and Editing of English Vernacular Ballads and Folk Lyrics 1820-1883* By E. David Gregory. Some thoughts on interpretations in the boxes.

*Bring us in good ale and bring us in good ale
and for our blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale
Bring us in no brown bread for that is full of bran
Nor bring us in no white bread, for therein is no gain
But bring us in good ale, good ale and bring us in good ale
and for our blessed Lady's sake bring us in good ale
Bring us in no mutton for that is passing lean
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clene
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no befe for ther is many bones
But bring us in good ale, for that goth down at once
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no bacon for that is passing fat
But bring us in good ale and bring us enough of that
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no eggys for ther are many schelles
But bring us in good ale and gife us nothing elles
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no butter for therin ar many herys
Nor bring us in no pyggys flesch for that will make us borys
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no poddyngs for therein is all goats blod
Nor bring us in no venison for that is not for our good
But bring us in good ale...
Bring us in no capons flesch for that is often dere
Nor bring us in no dokkes flesch for they slober in the mere
But bring us in good ale, good ale and bring us in good ale
and for our blessed Lady's sake bring us in good ale*



**Gustav Holst,
1921**
photograph by
Herbert Lambert

Gustav Theodore Holst (1874 to 1934) was an English composer, arranger and teacher. Best known for his orchestral suite *The Planets*, he composed a large number of works across a range of genres, including many traditional British songs. He was influential in bringing traditional music of the British Isles to the world's attention. Says author Michael Short: "many people who may never have heard any of [Holst's] major works ... have nevertheless derived great pleasure from hearing or singing such small masterpieces as the carol 'In the Bleak Midwinter'." Source: Short, Michael (1990). *Gustav Holst: The*

Man and his Music, Oxford University Press. Also, Wikipedia!

Bears vs Boars

“Nor bring us in no pyggys flesch for that will make us borys.” The word “borys” can be read as “bears,” as in the Holst piece we’re singing, or as “boars,” as in “The Borys Hede That We Bryng Here” (“The Boars Head Carol,” *The Ritson Manuscript*, British Museum, ca 15th Century). Since pigs/pyggys are young porkers while boars are adults, the idea that eating pig flesh could make big pigs of us does seem to fit and has a very modern sensibility, doesn’t it? (Think barbecue, folks!) Source: William Sandys, *Christmas Carols Ancient and Modern*, London: Beckley, 1833).

Ducks Slobber?!? Who Knew?

“Nor bring us in no dokkes flesch for they slober in the mere...” Yukk! The origins of the word “slobber/slobber” are surprisingly controversial (etymologists can get feisty over such things) but they could stand looking into, since the idea of ducks slobbering just doesn’t sit well. Apparently ducks, unlike most other birds, actually can drool a bit if they’re ill, but it’s pretty unusual. An alternate idea is that “slobber” came from the old Irish word “slab,” meaning “mud,” in wide use by the 1400’s. It’s thought that “slab” was adapted early on to “slabber,” and from that, to “slobber/slobber.” This, if correct, would make “slobber,” in 15th century Britain, mean “walking around in the mud.” Also... at that time the word “slaver” was used for “to drool.” The use of the word “slobber” to describe drooling didn’t catch on until the 18th century. So, points go to the “slab” theory, since the image of ducks paddling around in mud puddles (“mere” is the old form of mire) has a certain appeal, and just rings truer than a flock of drooling ducks!

Sources (all are internet):

OxfordWords Blog “From ‘trousers’ to ‘Tories’: unexpected Irish words in English,”
Memindex Free Online Dictionary,
Just Answer – Bird Veterinary

The Ups & Downs of Christmas Songs

In the 4th century, December 25th was formalized for celebrating the birth of Christ. This was followed by a surge of popular songs of celebration, many based on popular tunes of pagan origin. The Church, not happy with this, issued a number of official Christmas hymns. One of these, "*Veni, redemptor gentium*," attributed to St Ambrose, may be the earliest still-extant Christmas carol. The church-approved songs were apparently not very popular, though: they could be political, and were frequently beyond the reach or interest of most people.

Christmas celebration remained mostly limited to Church activities until the 13th century, when, it is said, St Francis of Assisi decided celebrating Christmas should bring joy to all believers. Francis encouraged and, himself organized, local nativity pageants which included narrative songs in the audiences' native languages. Christmas music again became literally popular after that long, dry spell. As enthusiasm grew, popular drinking songs were given Yuletide lyrics. Traveling entertainers picked these songs up and spread them far and wide.

This surge didn't last in England (and America), though, where Christmas celebrations as we know them today were essentially non-existent from the 17th to the 19th

Centuries. After the emergence of the Puritan movement, Christmas celebrations of the musical and festive sort were greatly frowned upon, and in 1647, under the urging of Oliver Cromwell, Christmas celebration was banned by Parliamentary Law. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony, a fine was levied on anyone found celebrating Christmas "consumed in Comptations, in Interludes, in playing at Cards, in excess of Wine, in mad Mirth," per Rev. Increase Mather.



Prince Albert's sleigh which he drove around Windsor castle, and a nice Victorian graphic.

Deck the Halls or Nos Galan Gaeaf

This early Welsh carol was probably sung at the Celtic New Year. The title Nos Galan Gaeaf means "New Year" (which would be Samhain, Nov 1). These English lyrics published in the 1860's show that the song became more "family friendly" even since then (note phrases in italics).

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa la la, etc. (insert after each line or couplet)
'Tis the season to be jolly
Fill the mead cup, drain the barrel
Troll* the ancient Yuletide carol,

See the flowing bowl before us
Strike the harp and join the chorus,
Follow me in merry measure
While I sing of beauty's treasure

Fast away the old year passes,
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Laughing, quaffing all together
Heedless of the wind and weather.

Source: John Hullah, *The Song Book* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1884), No. 248, p. 325.

* A meaning of "troll" is to "sing or play in a jovial manner." Origins are Middle English (probably Anglo-French). Appears in the 15th Century. Merriam Webster on-line

Two centuries later, British Christmas shook off its chains and re-emerged as a popular as well as religious holiday. The 1820s and 30s saw early scholarly compilations of British Christmas music, which included many of the carols we sing today (though the lyrics have changed over the decades. See "Deck The Halls"). This interest among scholars continued into the 1880's. In 1840, Queen Victoria married the German Prince Albert, who made it one of his projects to import Continental-style Christmas to Great Britain as "an echo of ... the old time, of what we thought and felt," in essence inventing an English popular Christmas tradition where little had previously existed. This trend really gained strength in 1843, when Charles Dickens published *A Christmas Carol*. A blow against the Puritan-deflated holiday, this book set a vivid picture of a (thoroughly revisionist) "traditional English Christmas," which colors holiday celebrations in Britain and the U.S. today.

Completing the two millennium cycle, the ever-expanding music of this "new traditional" Christmas includes many genuinely traditional songs which were not, originally, about Christmas at all, and many new songs which celebrate the overall Yuletide mood rather than the holiday itself.

Source: www.slate.com/articles/arts/assessment/2011/11

“Gaudete” – A Lot Can Change in Six Centuries, But This Song Hasn’t!

Gaudete (/ˈɡɔːdɛɪtɪ/; "rejoice" in Latin) is a sacred Christmas carol, which is thought to have been composed in the 16th century, but it could easily have existed earlier, as a monophonic hymn in the late medieval period, with the polyphonic (Alto, Tenor, and Bass) parts added during the 15th century. This seems likely due to its medieval Latin lyrics. The song was published in a collection of Scandinavian sacred songs in 1582. No music is given for the verses, but the standard tune comes from older liturgical books.

The Latin text is typical of the medieval song of praise, following the standard pattern for the time: a uniform series of four-line stanzas, each preceded by a two-line refrain. In early English carols this refrain was known as the burden.

Resource: Wikipedia

Gaudete, gaudete! Christus est natus
 Ex Maria virgine, gaudete!
*(Rejoice, rejoice! Christ is born
 (Out) Of the Virgin Mary — rejoice!)*

Tempus adest gratiæ
 Hoc quod optabamus,
 Carmina lætitiæ
 Devote reddamus.
*(The time of grace has come—
 what we have wished for,
 songs of joy
 Let us give back faithfully.)*

Deus homo factus est
 Natura mirante,
 Mundus renovatus est
 A Christo regnante.
*(God has become man,
 To the wonderment of Nature,
 The world has been renewed
 By the reigning Christ.)*



Simple Gifts

“Simple Gifts,” both music and lyrics, was written in 1848 by Elder Joseph Brackett at the Shaker Colony in Alfred, Maine, probably as a dance song. Dancing was a religious activity for Shakers.

The song remained relatively unknown until 1944, when Aaron Copland adapted it for a ballet he was composing for choreographer Martha Graham. Copland used “Simple Gifts” again, in his 1950 work, *Old American Songs for Voice and Piano*. “Simple Gifts” has been arranged, adapted and performed many times since.

Resource: Wikipedia



Quilt Raffle!

Handmade
 Quilt!
 Drawing
 on Dec 1st

Wouldn't
 This Make
 A Terrific
 Christmas
 Gift?



This photo shows the top of a traditional, handmade “Around the World” quilt which is being made by quilter (and Alto) Joyce Calhoun to benefit the Chorale. When completed, this will be a beautiful queen-sized, knotted quilt valued at about \$300. The main colors are dark blue (which looks sort of black in this photo), and shades of amber, gold and tan, with mainly light blue accents. The drawing will be on December 1st at the State Theatre Concert. To buy tickets (\$1 each), go on-line to www.brcsings.com or call 540-222-9099,

It's All GOOD – How to Waste Time, Do Your Homework & Raise Money!

Each time I write this newsletter, I spend quite a bit of time on the Internet researching and fact-checking. This is something I like to do. And I regularly do 2-3 searches a day anyway. I did something different this time, though: I did my searches through GoodSearch. I also did some of my on-line shopping through GoodShop, played on-line (free) solitaire games for an unconscionable amount of time through GoodGames, and signed up for GoodSwipe, which makes a donation each time I use my debit card. The shopping, the research, the games are all things I normally do: I just did them through those sites. The reason I did this is to help raise money for the Chorale (and because GoodGames has a really neat three dimensional MahJongg game!). In the period of a few weeks, I raised some money which will go to the Chorale: not much, but the numbers grow over time. It was easy, and the cost to me was \$0.00. Here's how it works. (note: GoodSearch is the "parent" program among these), but you can move among them.

GoodSearch offers a suite of services which allow its users to support their favorite nonprofit or school through simple everyday actions including searching the web search, shopping online, dining at participating restaurants, taking surveys, and playing online games. The company contributes 50% of its revenue to the cause designated by the user. The money donated comes from the search engine advertisers, merchants and participating restaurants.

According to the company's website, as of September 2013, more than 107,000 non-profits are participating in the program, 15 million individuals have utilized the service taking 1.2 billion charitable actions and more than \$10 million has been donated.

Organizations have used the money raised from Goodsearch to do everything from supporting cancer research, to buying books for a local library, to helping find homes for stray dogs, to cleaning up local rivers.

GoodSearch was founded in November 2005 by siblings Ken Ramberg (Co-Founder of JOBTRAK, purchased by Monster.com and operating today as MonsterCollege) and JJ Ramberg, host of MSNBC's weekend show Your Business. In 2011, Scott Garell, former President of Ask Networks, including Ask.com and Dictionary.com, joined GoodSearch as CEO.

A number of celebrities including Jessica Biel, Montel Williams, Jeff Bridges and Emily Deschanel have created videos promoting GoodSearch and the causes they care about.

GoodSearch is a Yahoo-partnered search engine that donates about a penny per search, to listed charities and schools designated by its users. The money donated comes from the site's advertisers. Users designate which of the selected charities their searches benefit and can also see how much money and how many searches have been performed on behalf of each charity.

GoodShop is an online shopping mall which has affiliations with more than 3,000 online retailers including Amazon, Target, Staples, Best Buy and Apple. A percentage of each purchase, as indicated on the GoodShop site, is donated to the user's designated charity or school.

GoodDining is a charitable dining program whose users can eat in or take out at 10,000 restaurants nationwide and earn up to 6% donations.

GoodSurveys offers users the opportunity to earn donations for their favorite cause simply by taking a survey.

With **GoodGames**, players of online games can now give back with every game they play. It's the first online game provider to give everyday cash donations for free.

GoodSwipe is a way to raise donations simply by swiping your credit or debit card for everyday purchases, automatically giving cash donations of up to 3% of purchases made at over 75,000 national retailers and restaurants.

The Chorale is now taking orders for beautiful poinsettias as a fund raiser. These make wonderful decorations as well as gifts! Order by Nov 18th, and pick up after Thanksgiving. Go to our website to order: www.brcsings.com



“Going Home” and Antonín Dvořák's *New World Symphony*

Although it is often thought that “Going Home” is a spiritual which composer Antonin Dvorak (pronounced like “Vorzhak”) adapted, that’s not the case. He composed it for a symphony. The story is a good one.

A native Czech (“Bohemian,” an ethnic minority in the Hapsburg Empire forced to accept German culture and language), Dvorak was a very popular composer in Europe. He was nationalist in his sentiments and especially interested in using Czech folk themes for his compositions. At that time in Europe interest in the Native Americans blossomed. Dvorak’s interest in cultural heritage naturally led him into the question of how a genuinely American music would develop.

In 1892, Dvorak arrived in New York to take the position of Director of the National Conservatory of Music. He wrote to a friend in Prague, “The Americans expect great things from me, and the main thing is to show them (how)... to create a national music.” Dvorak began his search for American music, consulting with American composers and instrumentalists and especially with his own students at the Conservatory, notably Harry T. Burleigh on the topic of African American traditional music. Dvorak challenged his students (one of whom, William Arms Fisher, wrote “Going Home”) to find and develop a true American music. He himself began composing what he felt could be a true reflection of the nation, his *New World Symphony*. Dvorak spent time in New York with native performers of Buffalo Bill’s “Wild West” and two weeks in Iowa learning music styles of the Kickapoo.

Dvorak’s *Symphony no. 9: From the New World* premiered in Carnegie Hall in December of 1893. It was hailed by some critics, and harshly decried by others, for its emulation of Native- and African-American themes. It is to this day the most popular symphony written in America, and the “Largo,” which his student William Arms Fisher adapted and added lyrics, creating “Going Home,” is known and loved around the world. Reviewing the *New World Symphony* premiere, W. J. Henderson of the *New York Times* said, “That folk music struck an answering note in the American heart. If these songs are not national, then there is no such thing as national music.”

Horowitz, Joseph. *Dvorak and the Teaching of American History*. josephhorowitz.com (from his book *Dvorak in America, In Search of the New World*, Cricket Books, 2003).

“The Largo, with its haunting English horn solo, is the outpouring of Dvorak's own home-longing, with something of the loneliness of far-off prairie horizons, the faint memory of the red-man's bygone days, and a sense of the tragedy of the black-man as it sings in his "spirituals." Deeper still it is a moving expression of that nostalgia of the soul all human beings feel. That the lyric opening theme of the Largo should spontaneously suggest the words 'Goin' home, goin' home' is natural enough, and that the lines that follow the melody should take the form of a negro spiritual accords with the genesis of the symphony.”

-- William Arms Fisher, Boston, July 21, 1922

Source: Wikipedia

Neil Armstrong took a recording of the *New World Symphony* to the Moon during the Apollo 11 mission, the first Moon landing, in 1969
Crowndozen.com, November 7, 2007

Henry Thacker (Harry T) Burleigh

It’s often discussed what role, if any, African American composer, arranger and performer Harry T Burleigh (1866-1949) had in composing “Going Home.” There’s no proof of his direct involvement in composing the Largo theme, but Burleigh was a student at the National Conservatory in New York while Dvorak was Director there, and it’s believed that he informed Dvorak’s view of African American music. Burleigh spent considerable time with Dvorak, singing spirituals and discussing music, and he became Dvorak’s copyist in 1893.

In his prolific musical career, Burleigh introduced the spiritual as art song. Altogether, he wrote 265 vocal works and made 187 choral arrangements.
Source: AfriClassical.com

“I am convinced that the future music of this country must be founded on what are called Negro melodies. These can be the foundation of a serious and original school of composition, to be developed in the United States... These beautiful and varied themes are the product of the soil. They are the folk songs of America... and your composers must turn to them.”

Dvorak interview with The New York Herald, 1893
Gutmann, Peter. "Dvorak's "New World" Symphony". *Classical Classics*. Classical Notes.



*So much happens
this time of year! From
all of us at the Blue
Ridge Chorale, we wish
you a beautiful
Autumn, a happy
Halloween and a warm
and meaningful
Thanksgiving. We are
thankful that you're part
of our community!*



