



# A New Season, A New Director, A New Concert!



We are very happy to welcome our new Director, Bob Burnett, to our regular Chorale season. Bob directed our July 4<sup>th</sup> singing this summer with great success (see p. 3) , and brings strong local experience, a passion for choral music and a vision for the Blue Ridge Chorale to his new role.

A native of New York City, Bob became interested in choral singing in school and at Yale, where he sang with the acclaimed Yale Russian Chorus, and toured with the Chorus in Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia. Bob would have liked to pursue a musical career, but circumstances dictated otherwise. Bob and his wife Betsy moved to this area in 1966, and by the late 1980s he was finally able to resume his musical career. He earned a master's degree in conducting at Shenandoah University and took classes at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J.

Now living in Jeffersonton, Bob has conducted music at the Culpeper Thanksgiving Music Festival, the Fauquier Theater, St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Haymarket, Grace Episcopal Church in The Plains and Culpeper Presbyterian Church. He is also a volunteer music teacher at Wakefield Country Day School and gives voice lessons to private pupils.

Bob and Betsy have two grown sons, one of whom is general manager of the Fauquier Springs Country Club in Warrenton. Bob Burnett sums up his passion with a quote from Ronald Reagan: "Life is one grand, sweet song, so start the music."

Adapted from Steve Clapp's August press release – Thanks, Steve!  
(See the Director's Corner on page 3)

**Feeling a Little Hesitant About Singing?** See Kurt Vonnegut's wonderful letter on page 4. Inside Vonnegut's great writing, there's a great message. And remember that we all feel that way until we try... and then we're glad we did it!

Photos of Bob and Jodi are courtesy of Studio C Photography, Culpeper.

## CHORALE NOTES

August, 2014

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Greetings to my musical peeps,

Summer is winding down which means it's time to rev up your vocal chords and plan on joining us for our first rehearsal this coming Monday August 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:15 pm. We are continuing to meet at Open Door Baptist Church.

The fall season is already shaping up to be a great one. We have a new director, Bob Burnett, who is really excited to be with us. He has a wonderful selection of songs picked out and is ready to lead us into the glory of the Christmas season. Please make sure to mention us to your friends, family and co-workers that love to sing and might be interested in joining us. We are always looking for new voices. Our main concert this fall will be at the beautiful State Theatre in Culpeper. We are working on securing one or two more concert venues and will keep you all apprised of our progress.

In addition to new singers we are always looking for folks that would like to contribute to the funding of the chorale. If you know of any individuals or companies that would like to help us out monetarily, so that we can continue to sing, please be sure to direct them to our website or one of our board members.

I look forward to seeing you next week and getting to know you better. Keep a song in your heart!

Jodi Stone  
President, Blue Ridge Chorale  
540-497-3408





As we have for many years, the Blue Ridge Chorale sang at the Reading of the Declaration which Culpeper's Minuteman Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution conducts each July 4<sup>th</sup>. This year's program included a very interesting and visually perfect exposition on the evolution of the flags of the United States as it came into its own independent being. Bob Burnett directed the Chorale; we sang great songs; and we had a nice turnout of about 30 Chorale singers. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful event! (see more photos on page 6)

Photos by Steve Miller



## Directors Corner – Bob Burnett

Another season, another reason, for makin'.....MUSIC....Glorious Music.....Glorious as in "Gloria"...As in "Gloria in Excelsis Deo": Glory to God in the Highest – the first of two themes for the BRC Christmas Concert(s) on December 5 and 7. The 'Glorias' range from the traditional carol "Angels We have Heard on High" through Daniel Pinkham's "Gloria", Natalie Sleeth's "Jazz Gloria" and Benjamin Harlan's "African Gloria".....utilizing both traditional and non-traditional rhythms and harmonies.



Our second theme has to do with Snow.....yes, Snow... as we offer a series of contemporary and traditional pieces relating to the white, fluffy stuff. No wishful thinking by your Director in spite of his having spent a number of his 'Wonder Bread Years' in New England, but rather a suggestion that Snow can provide opportunities for feasting, fellowship (including romance) and fun (again including romance).

And of course, no Christmas program would be complete without audience participation through the singing of familiar Christmas carols – perhaps with a twist or two! Stay tuned.

Vocal contributions from the Youth Chorale, significant instrumental accompaniments and stand-alone instrumental pieces will echo and expand the themes of the 2014 Christmas Concert(s) by your Blue Ridge Chorale.....and... we are enormously fortunate to have a truly gifted musician as our accompanist....Jesse Ratcliffe.

On a personal note: I am thrilled to be a part of the BRC. I believe there is a 'Sound', as yet unheard, to be produced by the Chorale; a 'Sound' which will come into existence on its own through a melding of singers and music. It has been my experience that a Total can often be Greater than the Sum of the Parts, for it is through the unifying of individual units that a separate unit can be created with its own distinct identity. Sounds weird? Perhaps, but it is this creative melding which produces the 'Sound' that characterizes a choral ensemble. I have only a glimmer of an idea of the BRC 'Sound', but early indications are that it will be glorious and fulfilling to all who participate in its creation.

Creation starts Monday, August 25, 6:30 pm at Open Door Baptist Church. Come create the BRC 'Sound'... I can't wait to hear it... thank you for the opportunity.

Bob Burnett, Music Director

### We have a new accompanist this season!

Brittany, who has been our accompanist for 5 years, is away on baby business, and we're very happy for her. This does, of course, mean we needed to find another talented accompanist... and we found Jesse Ratcliffe.

Jesse is the Organist and Choir Master at Saint James' Episcopal Church in Warrenton. He started playing piano and organ in churches when he was 12, and having earned his BA in Organ and History from Concord College, went on to achieve his Master of Music in Church Music and Organ at Shenandoah Conservatory in Winchester. Jesse is also Carillonneur of the forty-eight bell Carillon at Concord University, and also of the 47-bell carillon at Luray.

Welcome to the Blue Ridge Chorale, Jesse! We look forward to working with you!



Photo from Jesse's Facebook page

**Join Us...** The Chorale's Fall/Winter season starts with our first rehearsal next Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 (arrive 6:15) - 8:30 PM at Open Door Baptist Church in Culpeper. Our Youth Chorale (ages 7 and up) starts its season Monday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 (to 6:15).

We are a community chorale: what our singers have in common is that we love to sing. We welcome singers of all levels of experience and talent, and perform in a supportive environment. And, we can sing beautiful and interesting songs and produce a great sound, and have lot of fun doing it. Come see what the Blue Ridge Chorale is all about. It may be just perfect for you!

See our website, [www.brcsings.com](http://www.brcsings.com), for more information, or email us at [info@brcsings.com](mailto:info@brcsings.com)

## Grow Your Soul – a Letter of Inspiration

*In 2006, students of Xavier High School in New York wrote to their favorite American authors, asking each to visit the school. Five of these students wrote to American author Kurt Vonnegut (whose award-winning novels include Slaughterhouse Five, Cat's Cradle, God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater, Welcome to the Monkey House, and The Sirens of Titan). Vonnegut sent this letter in response. His eloquent letter is memorable and widely read because it speaks to all of us, not just as students, but throughout our lives.*

November 5, 2006

Dear Xavier High School, and Ms. Lockwood, and Messrs Perin, McFeely, Batten, Maurer and Congiusta:

I thank you for your friendly letters. You sure know how to cheer up a really old geezer (84) in his sunset years. I don't make public appearances any more because I now resemble nothing so much as an iguana.

What I had to say to you, moreover, would not take long, to wit: Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow.

Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and do it for the rest of your lives. Draw a funny or nice picture of Ms. Lockwood, and give it to her. Dance home after school, and sing in the shower and on and on. Make a face in your mashed potatoes. Pretend you're Count Dracula.

Here's an assignment for tonight, and I hope Ms. Lockwood will flunk you if you don't do it: Write a six line poem, about anything, but rhymed. No fair tennis without a net. Make it as good as you possibly can. But don't tell anybody what you're doing. Don't show it or recite it to anybody, not even your girlfriend or parents or whatever, or Ms. Lockwood. OK?

Tear it up into teeny-weeny pieces, and discard them into widely separated trash recepticals. You will find that you have already been gloriously rewarded for your poem. You have experienced becoming, learned a lot more about what's inside you, and you have made your soul grow.

God bless you all!  
Kurt Vonnegut

Source: [huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/14/kurt-vonnegut-xavier-letter\\_n\\_4964532.htm](http://huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/14/kurt-vonnegut-xavier-letter_n_4964532.htm)

### A Survey: Favorite Christmas Music

Page 6 is devoted to some sort of interesting trivia about popular Christmas music. So, tell us: what are your favorite Christmas songs overall, of the pop, sacred and/or novelty types? Let's find out! Send an email to [info@brcsings.com](mailto:info@brcsings.com) and list your 5 favorite songs in order (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>). If we get enough responses, we'll put the results in the next issue (October).

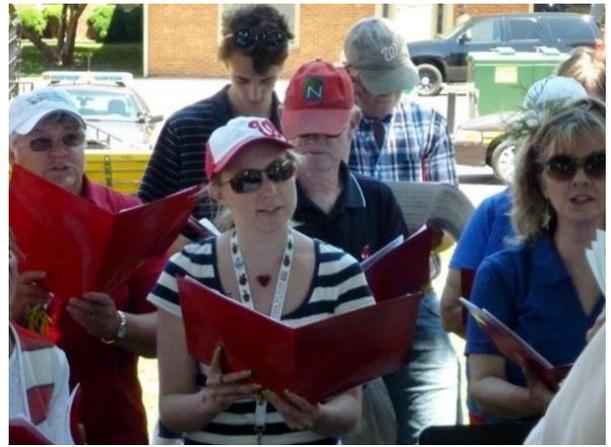
### Fall/Winter Season Rehearsal Information

**- SCHEDULE** By our current schedule, the Chorale will meet to rehearse each Monday evening (including Labor Day) at Open Door Church, Culpeper, from 6:30-8:30 PM, from August 25<sup>th</sup> through December 1<sup>st</sup>, except for Monday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, when instead we will meet at the State Theatre to rehearse. There may be changes in hours and locations, and perhaps an extra rehearsal scheduled as the season progresses, so stay alert to these.

**- CANCELLATIONS DUE TO WEATHER** usually follow Culpeper Schools' closing decisions but we will also email any info or changes.

**- BE SURE TO START WARMING UP YOUR VOICE** on the way to rehearsal by singing in the car, and be sure arrive on time, with properly warmed up tonsils, so that we all can get the most out of our rehearsal time.

**- STRETCHING** out those Monday kinks and knots, for those who want, will be led at 5:20.



Hats and caps were all the style this year, and they and the music sheets stayed put (with occasional intervention) pretty well despite a very breezy day.

The event ended with us singing "America the Beautiful," topped off with a properly timed musket salute: perfect!  
Photos by Steve Miller



# Holiday Music Trivia: We Just Love This Music!!!

## The 20 Most Performed Pop Holiday Songs (2001-2005)

This is from the ASCAP's (American Society of Composer, Authors and Publishers) list of the most-played holiday songs during 2001-2005. Look at the performance dates on these songs: we truly love the old favorites during the Holidays!

**#1 – “The Christmas Song,” (“Chestnuts roasting on an open fire...”)** composed in 1944 by Mel Tormé and Robert Wells. The most popular performance 2001-2005 continued to be Nat “King” Cole’s 1961 recording.

**#2 – “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,”** composed in 1944 by Ralph Blane and Hugh Martin. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was by The Pretenders (1987).

**#3 – (“Walking In a) Winter Wonderland,”** composed by Felix Bernard and Richard B. Smith, 1934. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 by Eurythmics (1987).

**#4 – “Santa Claus is Coming to Town,”** composed by J. Fred Coots and Haven Gillespie, 1934. The most popular performance: Bruce Springsteen (1985).

**#5 – “White Christmas,”** composed by Irving Berlin in 1940. Most popular in 2001-2005 continued to be Bing Crosby’s 1941 recording.

**#6 – “Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow,”** composed by Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne, 1945. The most popular continued to be Andy Williams’ 1961 recording.

**#7 – “Jingle Bell Rock,”** composed by Joseph Carleton Beal and James Ross Booth, 1957. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was by Bobby Helms (1957).

**#8 – “The Little Drummer Boy,”** composed by Kathrine K. Davis in 1941. The most popular recording continued to be the 1958 recording by The Harry Simeone Chorale.

**#9 – “Sleigh Ride,”** composed by LeRoy Anderson and Mitchell Parrish in 1948. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was by The Ronettes (1963).

**#10 – “Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer,”** composed by Johnny Marks in 1939. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was Gene Autry’s 1949 recording.

Sources: [www.ascap.com/press/2006/112706\\_xmassongs.html](http://www.ascap.com/press/2006/112706_xmassongs.html), Wikipedia

**#11 – “It’s The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year,”** 1963, composed by Edward Pola, George Wyle. The most popular performance: by Andy Williams (1963).

**#12 – “I’ll Be Home For Christmas,”** composed by Walter Kent, Kim Gannon, Buck Ram in 1943. The most popular performance (2001-2005) was recorded by Vanessa Williams in 1996.

**#13 – “Silver Bells,”** 1950, composed by Jay Livingston, Ray Evans. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was by Kenny G (1999).

**#14 – “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree,”** by Johnny Marks, 1958. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was the initial recording, by Brenda Lee, in 1958.

**#15 Feliz Navidad,”** 1970, by José Feliciano. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was Feliciano’s 1970 recording.

**#16 (“I’ll Have a) Blue Christmas,”** 1957, composed by Billy Hayes, Jay W. Johnson. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was by Elvis Presley (1957).

**#17 – “Frosty the Snowman,”** composed by Steve Nelson, Walter E. Rollins in 1950. Most popular performance for 2001-2005 was by The Ronettes (1963).

**#18 – (“Have a) A Holly Jolly Christmas,”** composed by Johnny Marks in 1964. The most popular performance (2001-2005) was by Burl Ives (1965).

**#19 – “It’s Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas,”** composed by Meredith Willson, 1951. The most popular performance in 2001-2005 was recorded by Johnny Mathis in 1986.

**#20 – “I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus,”** composed 1943 by Tommie Connor. The most popular performance (2001-2005) by John Mellencamp (1987).

***What are your favorite holiday songs, whether sacred, popular or novelty? Don’t forget to let us know by emailing [info@brcsings.com](mailto:info@brcsings.com)! Commence singing!***