



Corralin' the Chorale

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER of the VILLAGE CHORALE of LAGUNA WOODS
www.villagechorale.com

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Thanks & Congratulations!

To all who auditioned for solos in the Holiday Concert & those selected. The Village Chorale "got talent." Our winners promise to make this year's concert truly special. To the others, as Doug observed, the selected acts fit this occasion best, but there will be opportunities in the future so please plan to audition again.

Concert Reception

As noted below, there will be a reception following our December 19 concert in Dining Room 1 of Clubhouse 3. Refreshments will be served, and all chorale and audience members are invited.

For refreshments, members are invited to bring cookies; punch, coffee and tea will be provided. Volunteers are needed to set up and clean up (see Phil).

This from Carol Andrews:

Watch for two of our Village Chorale members on TV!

Yes, that is Joel Breeding and that is Adam Scoccia seen on local commercials. As well as being faithful Chorale members, they have each contributed personally in special ways to the Chorale. Joel was chosen to perform a piano solo a couple of years ago. And Adam has been for three years the one who collects and delivers gift packages to our service men.

You go, men!

(There will be a "test" next week to find if you know which companies they work for.)

Coming Up

NOVEMBER

24 TUE 12:30-1:30 BOARD MEETING
CH3 Conf. Room
1-2 pm MESSIAH REHEARSAL

DECEMBER

1 TUE 1-2 pm MESSIAH REHEARSAL
7 MON 7 pm MESSIAH SING-ALONG
w/LWV ORCHESTRA
Geneva Presbyterian Church
8 TUE LAST DAY FOR MEMBER
TICKET SALES
1-2pm SOLOISTS REHEARSAL
13 SUN BACH/RUTTER Concert Canceled
18 FRI 1-5pm CONCERT DRESS REHEARSAL
CH3 Aud. Normal Dress
19 SAT 1 pm CURTAIN CALL
3 pm "HOLIDAY" CONCERT
Concert DRESS
Cookies & Punch Reception in
Dining Room 1 immediately
following the concert
29 TUE 2-4pm LIBRARY Workday
VOLUNTEERS WELCOME!!

Messiah Memories

As the calendar indicates, our sing-along *Messiah* concert is coming up soon (Monday, Dec. 7.) This seems like a good time to share some experiences I've had of Handel's great work.

Handel's *Messiah*, as every singer knows, is one of the cornerstones of Western choral music, a work to be enjoyed by all who love music regardless of personal religious creed or belief. It is that rare piece that is both great music and hugely popular. Nevertheless, it is rather a lot to inflict on a young boy, as my parents did by taking me to several performances when I was young. Fortunately, as I grew to enjoy classical music I was able to repress those somewhat painful memories and arrive at a proper respect for this marvelous piece.

I grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, which is home to the Choral Union, said to be the second oldest continuously operating chorus in America, after the Handel & Haydn Society of Boston. I haven't verified this, but history tells us that the Choral Union began in 1879 when a group of local university and townspeople gathered together for the study of *Messiah*. This began an annual tradition. On the first weekend of each December, *Messiah* is given two grand performances in Ann Arbor, serving as a kind of unofficial start to the town's holiday season.

I was a member of the Choral Union for nine years, beginning in 1995. During that time, our music director was Thomas Sheets, a native of California with a doctorate from USC who conducted extensively in Orange County before taking the director's position in Ann Arbor. Tom is an excellent musician and under his leadership the performance level of the Choral Union grew steadily. (In 2004 the Choral Union recorded a work by William Bolcom that subsequently received a Grammy award. I'm sure it's no coincidence that I left the chorus a year earlier.)

The arithmetic suggests that I sang in 18 performances of *Messiah* as a member of the

Choral Union. Concerts were held in Hill Auditorium, which opened in 1913. Hill was justly known for its excellent acoustics and its paucity of bathrooms. (The latter problem was rectified a few years ago as part of a large remodel.) Singing *Messiah* in Hill Auditorium was always, for me, a glorious experience, despite the strain of the high tenor line on my second tenor vocal chords.

Handel was foremost a composer of opera and *Messiah* is essentially an opera without the staging. Like any opera it tells a story, and Tom Sheets believed that if the performance of *Messiah* is abridged, the story is spoiled. Therefore, under Tom's direction, we always performed the full oratorio, which amounts to roughly three hours. My wife Jan enjoys telling the story of the first performance she attended. At that time, she did not know the work very well. The auditorium was a little warm, and Jan began to wish for the proceedings to end sooner rather than later. She was encouraged when she read in the concert program that we were nearing the final "AMEN". So one can imagine her dismay when that little four-letter word lasted musically for another 10 minutes! As Tom Sheets liked to say, *Messiah* is a long song.

A long, but very great, song. Our sing-along at Grace Presbyterian will have some cuts, but it will be a great musical event just the same. Once again, Doug has assembled a fine quartet of soloists. I hope that all our members can and will join the performance.

Phil Enns

P.S. If you have a music-related story you would like to share with the Chorale, please let me know. Better yet, if you have a computer with e-mail, type up your account and send it to me (philedds@comline.com) for publication in a future edition of Choralin' the Chorale.