

University of Victoria Chamber Singers

Number 7 January, 15, 2011

Alumni Newsletter

THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

E-mails:

It was a total delight to hear from so many of you (over 100) since the August Newsletter. I treasure this contact and delight in hearing about you and what you are doing

Tour memories:

Many thanks to those of you wrote with lengthy memories of Chamber Singers and tours. Those continue to be of much help as I write my book on the Chamber Singers

Visits

Connie and I thoroughly enjoyed many Summer and Fall visits with Alumni: Jane (MacKenzie) Skinner in Sussex, Gloria (Borbridge) Kushel in London, Steve Seeds in Kent, and wonderful concerts in Victoria by Elizabeth MacIsaac (Ensemble Laude), Wade Noble (Prima) and the many alumni members of the new Vancouver Island Chamber Choir; in Nelson: Robert Kwan, Don MacDonald and Allison Girvan.



Chamber Singers Fall 2004

KUDOS

(a cross section of the many wonderful things Chamber Singers are doing - please don't be offended if you're not on this this random list, yet!)

Barbara Livingston - Newly appointed administrator of the Vancouver Bach Choir

Vanessa (Hughes) Johnson - Scored in the 92nd percentile on her LSATs.

Wes Janzen - Appointed Director of the Kiev Symphony Orchestra & Chorus.

James Roberston - 2nd horn position with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Opera & Ballet

Caitlin Keenan - Accepted and studying at Harvard Law

Chris Morash - Newly appointed Director of the Diocesan Office of Worship in Richmond, Va.

Darryl Neville - Returning from England where he played in the Coldstream Guards (for the Queen etc.), he is back in Victoria as the Director of the Music Education Centre at Long & McQuade.



Marching with Fidel in Havana - May 1, 2001

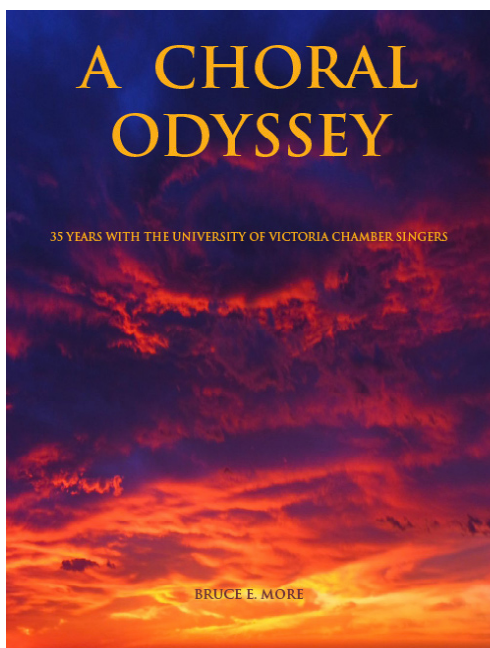
IN THIS ISSUE

Page 1 - Newsletter

Page 2 - Tour Page - The definitive list of tours since '74

Page 3 & 4 - The Chamber Singers' draft chapter.

THE BOOK IS STARTED!



Read a chapter (on page 3 & 4 of this newsletter).
Send Bruce your ideas and memories for the other chapters.

ALUMNI REUNION AT THETIS

JULY 2011?

We very much hope to begin a once a year Chamber Singers alumni weekend at Morehaven in July, 2011. Please send me a note if you are interested or better still have a cohort of Chamber Singers friends who might be interested. Please send me your possible/ preferred dates as this will help us focus on a date. Also, if you wish to contact one of your Chamber Singer friends, write me and I'll send whatever e-mail address I have.



See what are Bruce & Connie up to?

<http://krunchd.com/morenews>



PROFILE

Brian Berryman '89

A flautist, Brian graduated from UVic in 1989 and went to Stanford University in California for their Doctor of Musical Arts program in Baroque performance practice and to the Royal Conservatory in the Hague to study Baroque flute with Wilbert Hazelzet. (DMA from Stanford and "Certificaat" from the Hague in 1994). In 1995 he moved to Germany to his wife's home town of Braunschweig. Since then he has made a career freelancing on historical flutes with various orchestras in Germany and elsewhere in Europe with concerts in most European capitals as well as opera performances at the Mostly Mozart festival in New York and a tour through Japan with the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra.

Together with his wife, a professional recorder player and baroque oboist, he founded a chamber ensemble called "La Ricordanza"; recording 5 CDs. They have two children, David (10 years old) and Ketí (8 years old).

Brian speaks of his participation in the 1987 Chamber Singers first tour to Europe. "I was so enthralled with the place that I vowed to come back, and now I've made my life here. It's been funny to think back and realize that I've played concerts now in almost every single city we visited back then: Amsterdam, Budapest, Bonn, Vienna, London. That tour was one of the formative experiences of my life and my time in the Chamber singers had only one major flaw: It was much, much too short!"

"One last memory: A choir weekend on Thetis, people telling grisly ghost and dismemberment stories till late at night in the living room of your cottage, and you waking us all up at seven the next morning, with a running chainsaw. Not something you easily forget..."



Tour '03 - Two maidens and 2 snakes

E-mail comment of the year: Of all the conductors I've worked with, you are definitely..one of them!

The Tours

THE SMALL TOURS

Defined as tours lasting a week or less. These were on-continent tours, held during Reading Break in mid-February, except for the late December trip to California in 1982. Some of the tours from 1981 through 1987 were in cooperation with Carol Young's University of California Chamber Choir: "Perfect Fifth", with whom we had an amazing synergy while traveling and performing together.



the first out-of-province "concert" in Crow's Nest Alberta - February, 1982

THE BIG TOURS

Defined as concert tours lasting more than two weeks. Most were 'off-continent' They began in 1987 and (with the exception of the on-continent tours of 1990 and 1992), were taken on odd-number years. In 1998, Prima Youth Choir began their even-year tours. Without exception, these tours began in the days following exams in April and lasted about three weeks, returning in mid-May. The gap in '94 was due to my sabbatical during that school year.

LIST OF ALL TOURS - ("big tour" in boldface & Prima tours underlined)

Tour #1	5 days	75/02/23 Nelson, Trail, Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon, Kamloops
Tour #2	5 days	76/02/27 Ucluelet, Powell River, Nanaimo, Ganges
Tour #3	5 days	77/02/17 Capilano College, Trinity College, Douglas College
Tour #4	5 days	78/02/16 Powell River, Courtenay, Parksville, Qualicum Beach, Nanaimo
Tour #5	5 days	79/02/22 Vanderhoof, Fraser Lake, Ft. St.James, Prince George, Williams Lake
Tour #6	5 days	81/02/14 Vancouver (Washington), Arcata, Oakland, Berkeley
Tour #7	5 days	82/02/18 Duncan, Campbell River, Port Alberni
Tour #8	5 days	82/12/18 Vancouver (Washington), Arcata, San Francisco, Berkeley.
Tour #9	5 days	84/02/17 Fernie, Sparwood, Nelson
Tour #10	5 days	85/02/13 Seattle, Friday Harbour
Tour #11	5 days	86/02/16 Redding, Sacramento U., Stanford U., University of California - Berkeley
Tour #12	21 days	87 Western Europe: Taunton, Canterbury, Utrecht, Bonn, Vienna, Budapest, Maribor, Padua, St. Moritz, Bern.
Tour #13	5 days	88/02/24 U. Washington, Roosevelt HS, Orcas Island, Friday Harbour
Tour #14	21 days	89 Australia and New Zealand: Honolulu, Melbourne, Brisbane, Nelson, Wellington, Lower Hutt, Napier, Hastings, Hamilton, Auckland.
Tour #15	5 days	90/04/20 Princeton, Cranbrook, Medicine Hat, Regina, Winkler, Muncie, Bloomington, Boulder
Tour #16	21 days	'91 Eastern Europe: Helsinki, Leningrad, Tallinn, Kiev, Krakow, Budapest, Vienna
Tour #17	5 days	92/04/23 Eureka, Oakland, Santa Clara Mission, Santa Barbara, Fullerton, Sacramento, University of Portland
Tour #18	21 days	'93 Southeast Asia: Tokyo, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Taipei, Tunghai
Tour #19	21 days	'95 Australia and New Zealand: Auckland, Napier, Nelson, Wellington, Wanganui, Christchurch, Dunedin, Sydney
Tour #20	5 days	96/02/17 Abbotsford, Nelson, Kelowna, Merritt, North Vancouver, U.B.C.
Tour #21	21 days	'97 Britain and South Africa: Taunton, Oxford, London, Jo'burg, Pieteraritzburg, Durban, East London, Knysna, Mossel Bay, Cape Town
Tour #22	5 days	98/2/19 Tofino, Denman Island, Nanaimo, Parksville
Tour #23	21 days	'98 Vienna, Budapest, Szekesfehervar, Graz, Trieste, Munich
Tour #24	21 days	'99 Southeast Asia: Seoul, Kwangju, Bangkok, Chiangmai, Shenzhen, Dongguan City, Taipoo, Hong Kong
Tour #25	5 days	00/02/21 U. of Western Wash., U. of Wash., Pacific Lutheran, Portland, Pacific U.
Tour #26	21 days	'00 San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara, Fullerton, San Diego, Yosemite, Sacramento
Tour #27	5 days	00/11/01 Toronto: University Voices concerts
Tour #28	21 days	'01 Cuba/Mexico/Belize: -Havana, Buena Vista, Cienfuegos, Merida, Valladolid, Chetemal, Corozon City, Belize City, Belmopan
Tour #29	21 days	02/02/18 New Westminster, Kamloops
Tour #30	21 days	'02 Seoul (2), Sokcho, Bangkok, Chiangmai, Hong Kong, Taipoo
Tour #31	21 days	'03 Brazil & South Africa. Rio de Janeiro, Petropolis, Florianopolis, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg, Grahamstown, Mossel Bay, Guguletu
Tour #32	21 days	04/02/22 U.W.Washington, Linfield University, Portland State University
Tour #33	21 days	'04 Budapest, Oradea, Cluj, Gheorgeni, Brazov, Ispirii, Istanbul
Tour #34	21 days	'05 People's Republic of China: -Shanghai, Suzhou, Chengdu, Chongqing, Xian, Beijing
Tour #35	21 days	06/02/23 Castlegar (Brilliant), Nelson, Grand Forks, Penticton
Tour #36	21 days	'06 Monterrey, Ciudad Victoria, Vista del Mar, Xalapa
Tour #37	21 days	'07 Hungary, Rumania, Ukraine, Russia: Budapest, Oradea, Cluj, Gheorgeni, Brazov, Odessa, Kiev, Yasnaya Polyana, Moscow
Tour #38	21 days	'08/22 Nanaimo, Comox, Langley, Brilliant, Medicine Hat, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa
Tour #39	21 days	'09 - Seoul (3), Sokcho, Yangyang, Phnom Penh, Siem Riep, Ruamruardee, Bangkok, Hong Kong

A Choral Oddysey - Chapter ?

Europe '87 - The First Overseas Tour



We owed our first big tour to Carol Young and Perfect Fifth Chamber Choir (P-5) from the University of California – Berkeley. After several years of visiting each other and touring together, they suggested that we apply to join them at ACFEA's choral festival in St. Moritz, Switzerland. ACFEA is the premiere choral tour planning company with offices in Europe and North America. The process began with one of their agents coming to UVic to hear us perform. The subsequent invitation developed into a full concert tour, beginning with just the Chamber Singers in England, The Netherlands and Germany, then joining with P-5 in Vienna and travelling to Hungary and Italy before winding up in St. Moritz and Bern for the festival.

The beginning of this tour was one of the most rewarding musical experiences of my life. I was on sabbatical in Los Angeles with my family during the school year, and all preparations with the singers were done "in absentia". Patti (Robertson) Thorpe was a wonderful liaison between me and the group. Together we organized a choir of 20 singers, including Fred Hanes and Ben Pease who joined us from Berkeley to fill out the small number of men we were able to field from UVic. We got the music and a tape out to the singers in February, and without a single preparatory rehearsal, we met in Taunton England for 3 days of intensive

rehearsals. The extreme generosity of hosts Christopher Banks and the Michael Huish School made this amazing accomplishment possible. With an individually prepared group of singers, we put together a full concert programme in that short time. It worked! Our first concert in Taunton Cathedral was a complete success and propelled us forward to Canterbury, where a "devout" host cancelled our concert because the Cathedral Choir was performing St. John Passion that night. (You just gotta love them Anglicans!).

On our way to our meeting with Berkeley in Vienna, we did a radio broadcast for the Dutch NCRV Radio in Hilversum. In Amsterdam, we stayed at Bob's Youth Hostel, in a building 5 stories high and about 10 feet wide (or so it seemed). If it wasn't a luxurious experience, at least it was great exercise "schlepping" our suitcases up 5 flights of stairs. As we descended to find a restaurant for dinner, our daughter Alexis (9 years old at the time) asked, "Daddy, why do all the windows have red lights in them?" It wasn't until that moment that I realized we were in the middle of the famed prostitute area of that great city. Oh well, nobody can accuse me of bring my kid up in a sheltered environment!

In Bonn we were hosted by my UVic colleague Bill

Kinderman, his pianist wife Eva and their children Danny and Laura, who were on sabbatical there during that year. I have it on good authority that Bill (eminent Beethoven scholar) was speaking with Beethoven's ghost on a regular basis. The concert was in a delightful chapel on the University of Bonn campus with an equally delightful audience. Although a scholar of the highest order, Bill didn't keep time very well. I remember freaking out on the way to the concert, as we sat at a railway crossing between 8pm and 8:10 while trains went back and forth, back and forth in front of us (the concert was scheduled for 8pm). We had strict instructions from the prelate of the chapel to not perform any non-sacred music in the Chapel, and thankfully we had enough suitable music for 40 minutes or so of singing. At the end of the concert, I pointed out to the audience that we had another half programme of secular music, including some wonderful Beethoven canons. I invited them out into the hallway, which was just large enough for us and them, and we finished the programme. They all stayed, and we had a great time together. When I go to sleep at night, I include Bonn in my prayers, hoping that none of those sounds filtered into the chapel and damaged it somehow.

In Vienna, we met our "buddies", the University of California Chamber Choir "Perfect Fifth". We didn't

perform in Vienna but had a couple of rehearsals on our joint repertoire. This was a truly historic occasion for the Chamber Singers as it was here that Carol Young first taught us "Lord, I Know I Been Changed", the song which became a sort of "anthem" for the Chamber Singers (and later Prima) for the next 23 years. In our joint concerts, we processed together while singing Gregg Smith's "Navajo Prayer" or "Now I Walk in Beauty", another contribution to the Chamber Singers' musical heritage (and subsequently to the choral repertoire of BC). Carol Young was a major figure in my career. She was an adventurous programmer who brought many wonderful works to my attention and subsequent performance. She was also the "force" which gave me the final push to enter the heady world of international concert touring.

My wife Connie, the Kodaly Scholar, had made the Hungarian connections for us as we "processed" together across the quickly vanishing "Iron Curtain". (This is why she acquired her nickname "Hol van a W.C.?" - where's the bathroom?) Our host in Budapest was Béla Pálos with the Epitök Kórusa" (Builder's Chorus). In addition to one of those splendid "hands across the borders, music is the universal language" parties with singers from that choir, we were provided with accommodation at their summer retreat on the Roman River (a feeder to the Danube). They also treated us to many restaurant meals during our stay. One of their singers worked in a large music store, and he opened it up on a Sunday afternoon, giving our music students the opportunity to purchase major scores at a fraction of their Canadian cost.

Budapest provided the most prestigious venue of the tour for us: the recital hall of the original Liszt Academy. We were welcomed by the Canadian Ambassador to Hungary. This was the first of many recognitions of our Canadian presence in foreign countries. I have always been amazed at how anxious the foreign service has been to take some credit for our visits around the world, but with the exception of a hot-dog lunch at the embassy in London ('97), wonderful receptions by ambassadors in Bangkok ('02) and Havana ('01), not a dime was ever contributed to the actual costs of our trips. After being told on a number of occasions that a university choir, already supported by the publicly funded university, would not likely be granted money from the Department of External Affairs, I finally gave up and went after the highest levels of the university for funds, and by 1995 we started to get some, as we became recognized as musical ambassadors for the institution and country. UVic Presidents Howard Petch, David Strong and David Turpin were most supportive and generous over the years.

Our trip down "Kodaly" lane took us to Székesfehérvár, to a school where Connie had student-taught in 1969. Here we heard how music (especially vocal music) should be taught, while observing a wonderful class of young people and singing for them in their classroom. It was at lunch here that we finally realized we simply couldn't stand having Wiener schnitzel yet again! In Eastern Europe of that time, meat was rare and expensive. So a show of the ultimate hospitality would be to lay on a meal of potatoes (krumpli), cucumber salad (uborka saláta) and Wiener schnitzel (Bécsi szelet). It was wonderfully delicious the first time, excellent the second time, pretty decent the third time, but by the 10th time, we were longing for something different (corn flakes!?). Generally speaking we didn't let our feelings show because we knew that

the hosts meant well.

Going south, our next stop was Maribor in Slovenia (after a lengthy border delay). It was another wonderful hosting by a local chorus, who shared a concert with us at a local theatre. We encountered our first real financial hassle of the trip in the hotel here. Several of our members were getting to the point where they were missing Mommy and Daddy so wanted to call home. Accordingly, they asked at the desk how to connect with the Canadian operator and asked if there would be any charge incurred. In those years, Canada provided this opportunity to make collect calls to recipients so that the traveller didn't have to pay exorbitant fees at source. The singers were told that there would be no charge for this. The next morning, as many as 10 members of the group were presented with bills ranging from \$100 to \$150 Canadian each. After much arguing with the manager, we came to an agreement that the hotel would remove their "surcharge", resulting in a reduction of the cost to about 25% of the original.

Ah, Venice!! City of Vivaldi, City of love, City of canals and gondolieri, City of exhaust smells, poop smells and sweaty German tourists in t-shirts and Lederhosen. But seriously folks, we had a wonderful time as one always does in that great city. Our itinerary was very busy that day, as we had to get to Padua for an evening concert. This was presented in the Basilica Chiesa di San Francisco di Padua, and it provided what was undoubtedly the most wonderful acoustic and probably the most "Twilight Zone" moment of the tour. During our joint presentation of Richard Felciano's "The Seasons" in the movement entitled "Summer" - replete with the humming sound of bees and other pastoral references - a real thunder and lightning storm passed by, reflecting its flashes in the high windows, with its disappearance coinciding with the end of the movement.

Excitement grew as we finally approached our ultimate destination: the St. Moritz Festival. This was an extremely pleasant place for a sojourn, possessing all of the charm of a high alps summer and surprisingly (at that time of year), not overwhelmingly "touristy". In addition to hiking opportunities, our days were filled with various workshops (including one by Connie) and rehearsals toward the final production of Mozart's Requiem, to be held in Bonn. On the Sunday, we sang in a morning service at a small nearby parish church. Our ACFEA escort, the dashing young Hugh Davies, our "auditioner" in Victoria, became a tour organizer for most of our trips in the ensuing 23 years.

In the evenings, our residence had a little night club called the "Maruch" in the basement. I have a strong memory of my daughter once boogying with the singers at 2 am (no sheltering going on here!). 20 years later, when Alexis was plying her craft as a strings teacher in Nelson, a string instructor opening came up at Selkirk College, for which she applied. I had a picture of her dancing in the Maruch with Don MacDonald (by now Head of the music programme at Selkirk College) which I offered to send to Don to "assist" in her application. Happily, Alexis had learned enough about the ethics of the business to decline. I also remember being appalled at the behaviour of our massed choir conductor at the Maruch, who nightly "pressed" his desires against several of our sopranos and altos. He was excellent on the podium, but lower than whale dung on the dance floor.

The festival participants were a group of choirs from across the U.S. organized by ACFEA. This included us and Carol Young's Berkeley group, and also a choir from northern Michigan under the direction of Doug Amman, a conductor with whom I subsequently had a long and happy connection. The many groups sang for each other during 2 evenings, one formal and one informal. The administrator of the festival was Harold Aks, an acquaintance from my Yale grad school years when he was the long-time choral conductor at Sarah Lawrence College. (I sang the baritone solos in the Mozart Requiem under him there in 1970. Connie travelled with me for the concert, there was a solar eclipse in the afternoon, and I proposed to her on the trip back - quite a day!) Harold wrote of our St. Moritz performance in the formal evening concert: "In a group of talented choruses the U. Vic. Chamber Singers were unquestionably the best. They handled a varied and difficult program with skill and flair. I was very impressed not only with the chorus's ability on a technical level, but with the sensitive musicianship which they displayed."

For the last night informal concert in St. Moritz, the choirs performed for each other in an evening of general frivolity. Brian Berryman remembers my classic poor judgment as follows: "I remember my first clear indication of the gulf between Canadian and American culture, when we sang a fake "white Negro spiritual" for the talent night with some "Aunt Jemima" style lyrics about fried chicken and watermelon rind...it did NOT go over well. We had no idea how tense the issue of race was in the States and figured they'd find it funny...dead wrong!" The ironic thing was that one singer who thought it was great was the only Black person at the festival, a member of the college choir from Birmingham, Alabama.

Our stay in Bern at the end of the tour was devoted to rehearsals and the performance of Mozart's Requiem with Peter Maag and the Bern Symphony Orchestra. Karen Patullo (now Shumka) remembers: "One of the all time highlights of my entire musical career was singing the Mozart Requiem in Bern - I can still close my eyes and get chills thinking about it." For my own part, the trip was about the UVic Chamber Singers as they triumphantly launched themselves into world touring. My own entry in the tour book speaks eloquently to the progression of my neurotic feelings on the day of our solo concert: "Whoops, hold on, tonight is the biggest concert of all, singing for our peers. Four other excellent groups will be listening.....and judging.....to quote Charlie Brown - Aughhhhhh!" Later in the day: "Our portion of the programme was for me a career high! Here we are in the most difficult ambience of the tour and the group is doing it again! The excitement begins to build right after our first piece, each applause growing longer and longer, culminating with an extended standing ovation at the end. The fact that this audience reaction was unique to our performance confirmed all that I have known of our group!" I end this chapter as Don MacDonald did in his last day entry of the tour book, with a quote from Li Ching Chao (Komorous) and Shakespeare (Vaughan Williams). "It comes back to me often; the cloud capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself. We are such things as dreams are made on....."