



Aug. 15
2010

University of Victoria Chamber Singers

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER #6

What are YOU doing these days?

In subsequent newsletters, I'd love to have a section which tells what some of you have been doing since graduation. Your former colleagues would love to hear about you.

Write to me!!!



Some of the 1988-'89 Chamber Singers

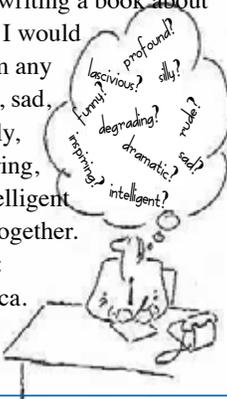
The Chamber Singers' Book

Yes, as promised, I'm writing a book about the Chamber Singers. I would love to have input from any of you who have funny, sad, dramatic, profound, silly, lascivious, rude, inspiring, degrading, or even intelligent memories of our time together.

You know where I live:

bmore@uvic.ca.

C'mon - write me!!!



Morehaven '06: "Cold and slimy & has no ear, must be a choral conductor."

Prima News

After countless years of participation and 2 seasons of conducting Prima Choir (while Bruce was on sabbatical in '00 and '05), Wade Noble has been appointed permanent conductor of Prima. Two excellent concerts (Nov. '09 and April '10) show an extremely healthy choir with Wade firmly at the helm.

New Chamber Singers conductor search

The Dean of Fine Arts has announced that the next position in Fine Arts will be a full-time choral person to replace Bruce. An international search will begin soon. A local conductor: Brian Wismath has been hired to conduct in the interim 2010-2011 year.

What are Bruce & Connie up to?

After a career of travelling, Connie and I discovered (during a 6 week trip to South Africa in '05) that we mostly enjoyed travelling "just the two of us" (with no offense intended to any of our 400 or so travelling companions during the 20 concert tours). Last Fall, we took a car trip for 3 months across Canada to Burgeo, Newfoundland and south to Virginia, spending Christmas with Connie's mom in Virginia and returning to Castlegar for New Year with Alexis & Andrew. We visited many alumni, including Don MacDonald ('84-'89), Allison Girvan ('86-'90), Mark Ward ('90-'92), Jennifer Bergstreser Kirkpatrick ('04-'07), Dallas Bergen ('95-'01), Lucas Marchand ('01-'04), Graham Robinson ('99-'02), Glen Fast ('71-'75), Robert Kwan ('97-'00) and Mark Bell ('82-'87). From January through April, I conducted Chamber Singers for the last time, giving a concert of Eric Whitacre music on April 8. A greatly appreciative audience and a full house gave a memorable final send-off. In May, we went to LA, Las Vegas for three weeks, and back to Castlegar for a month. June and July in Victoria, August and early Sept. in Castlegar will be followed by 6 weeks in England, returning to Victoria on November 9. On November 14, I guest conduct the choir which I founded in Nanaimo in 1970. This is part of Malaspina Choir's (Wade Noble conductor) 40th anniversary celebration. In the Spring we go to France & Senegal.

Retirement Rocks!



Keep track of us at: <http://krunchd.com/morenews>

New Chamber Choir

A group of recent Chamber Singers / Prima / Viva alumni have started a new chamber choir: The Vancouver Island Chamber Choir/ With one or two exceptions, the group is made up of former UVic Chamber Singers, Prima & Viva Singers and have just completed their first season. Cindy Lewis, Ryan Noakes, Tim Dotchin, Andrew Scambler and others have provided a wonderful opportunity for graduating singers to continue performing high level Chamber Choir repertoire. Connie and I are proud to be honorary patrons.



2008-'09 Chamber Singers after concert party at Wagonwood



Waiting for a flight at the end of the '07 Russian Tour

Reunion tour

Two years in the planning, over 300 of the 450 members from the past 35 years were located and contacted. Over 150 alumni from all over North America and as far away as Korea participated in this most exciting event, held at St. Aidan's United Church in Victoria, or participated in the organization and attendance at concerts across Canada during the following weeks.



The triumphant return from the '90 California Tour

Last tour to Asia - May, 2009

The Chamber Singers and Prima Choir gave sixteen performances in Korea (Seoul, Anyang, Daejeon, Sokcho and Yangyang), Cambodia (Phnom Penh and Siem Riep) and Thailand (Ruamrudee and Bangkok). The Korea portion was organized by Chamber Singers alumni Felipe Sequeira (1998-'01) and Graham Specht (1997-'02) both of whom participated in the 1999 concert tour and subsequently married Korean women, who also contributed immensely to our visit. In Cambodia the singers were hosted by the Canada-based Cambodian Support Group through the hard work of Arne Sahlen and Chantavouth Hy (a Cambodian tenor studying in Canada). Thailand presented a great contrast to the previous countries in that the host was the Ruamrudee International School, organized by Nikolas Trebesh. After an exciting but sometimes exhausting two and a half weeks, three days in the "Paris" of SE Asia, Hong Kong, provided well-deserved R&R.

Chamber Singers alumni get-together at Thetis - Summer 2011?

We very much hope to begin a once a year Chamber Singers alumni weekend at Morehaven in summer, 2011. Please send me a note if you are interested or better still have a cohort of Chamber Singers friends who might be interested. 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.



The 2002-'03 Chamber begin their year at Morehaven

Alumni Profile - Robert Kwan

Assistant to the Organist-Choirmaster at Christ & Holy Trinity Church, Westport, CT. Robert (Chamber Singers 1997 - '00) travelled with us singing & accompanying, to England and South Africa in '97 and Eastern Europe in '98. After completing his Bachelor of Music degree at UVic, he was appointed to St.



George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He then went to Rochester, N.Y. where he received the degrees of Master of Music in 2003 and Doctor of Musical Arts in March 2008 from the Eastman School of Music. This Fall, Robert will give an organ recital at the prestigious St. Thomas Church in Manhattan. Robert participates in recreational activities, such as tennis in the summer and curling in the winter.

Amy Remembered



Amy at the ticket table at our last alumni tour concert in Toronto.

Our readers may remember an earlier newsletter which profiled Amy Doolittle (Chamber Singers 1978-'81). In spite of the fact that Amy suffered from ALS, those of you who were at the reunion will remember her presence in a wheelchair, having travelled from Mississauga to attend. Two weeks before Connie and I had planned to visit her in late October of 2009, we received the sad news of her passing. With Charles Barber's (Chamber Singers 1982-'83) permission I have included his e-mail to Amy's husband Don as I can't imagine a more eloquent expression of who Amy was.

Dear Don,

Please accept, for you and Carolyn, all the presents of love and sympathy that are right now winging your way. Please accept as well, if you can, the notion that Amy's life was gloriously well led. Its duration will never be its measure. Amy and I first met over 25 years ago, she playing flute (well) and I viola (badly) and pretending to be a conductor. I think we hit it off instantly. Like everyone I was drawn to her sheer vivaciousness, her laugh, her drive, her acute disdain of everything phony, her juggernaut energy moving every thing and every one into AmyOrbit. Who could resist this woman? Not me.

I consider it one of the great days in my life that I got to know her, to see her in action and in the world. In many ways, since her diagnosis, it was also a great thing to see her sheer energy transmute into sheer determination, ambition into courage, music-love into all-love.

It was so great to be with her on her last trip to Victoria, to roll around in wheelchairs together, to sing together, to pose for idiotic photos, and to poke fun at our best friends.

I thank you and Carolyn for sharing Amy. I thank you for being at her constant side, forgiving, patient, tireless, being unafraid (or so she imagined), and simply being there in your endless love for her.

I, for one, can't imagine a better object for your love. Not one.

Chamber Singers Website

With a slight change of URL, continues as a "living archive". All the features of the reunion website remain:

Recordings Venues Reviews
Audio Clips Video Clips Kudos
Newsletters
Alumni Search information
"by year" pages

<http://finearts.uvic.ca/music/ensembles/chambersingersarchive/>



1983 - '84 Chamber Singers in Nelson, BC

Bruce's final remarks at the Reunion:

It's been a long and wonderful journey - literally and figuratively. I think my biggest regret is that I'm not very good with goodbyes and many of the greatest Chamber Singers have graduated and moved on without my being able to say goodbye and thank you. I am also really sorry that my Chamber Singers before 1981 didn't have a chance to experience a Thetis Island retreat and those before '87 didn't get to go on an overseas concert tour. Just know that it was your efforts in establishing Chamber Singers as a serious performing group that ultimately made all that possible.

I can't say what the best year was, they all seemed like the best. Every group brought its own joy and excitement for me. I will say that my happiest years at UVic. were the 4 years that Alexis was at the school with me. My darkest moment - Prince George. '78 - when during a workshop with the Cantata Singers, someone handed me a note from the College organizer which said "I'm sorry, we couldn't find you any billets, but you'll find motels on Third Street." Two of the hundreds of musical highs which stand out for me were: The concert in Palo Alto with a choir that had just won the "Choir of the World" prize in Llangollen, Wales. As Charles Barber later wrote, "we blew them away", and our University Centre performance of the most difficult and yet rewarding work I have ever conducted: Igor Stravinsky's "Les Noces"

My favourite student quotes:

"Simon Leung's immortal outburst after 4 years of being the polite asian immigrant: "Missa More - you a jerk!
James Patterson's excuse for missing a rehearsal: "I found a cat and didn't know what to do with him". Several months later, James called again to say he couldn't come to rehearsal because of a power outage..... This prompted Don MacDonald to suggest "Maybe he couldn't plug in his cat"! A few years ago as I was having a fit with the tenor section (a totally unusual event), not one of whom had come in on a very clear cue- I said "for God's sake, sing something" - Isaiah's response was to sing "tomorrow, tomorrow" (from "Annie"). My favourite comment to a student after being told 2 minutes before the concert that he had left his tux on the bus - I said "Oh Murray, how could you" - he responded with "I've never done it before" and I said "You know Murray, most people go an entire career without leaving their tux on a bus". Beth Whitmore's comment as she was being picked up by a host in New Zealand, in response to the host pointing out that no women sang in the Cathedral Choir - "That's kind of stupid isn't it!"

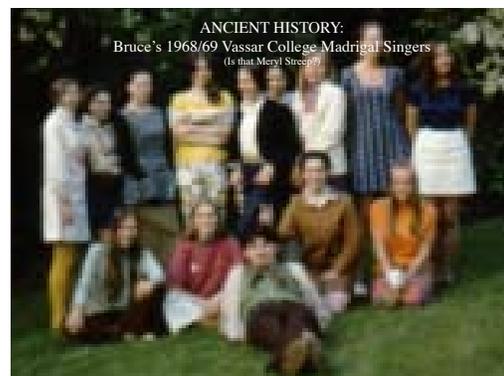
My favourite in-rehearsal Whimoreism - after having made a mistake and saying "I'm sorry, I feel like a complete idiot" Beth pointed out "but Bruce, you are a complete idiot". Again in New Zealand, at a particularly

spectacular beach, we decided to take a group photo, but we couldn't find a camera. At that point Asako Shimizu pulled a camera out of her pocket saying "sometimes it's great being Japanese". And then there were the student evaluations forms - my favourites were: "His sense of humour has yet to be understood by all" & "His dog humped my leg" and lastly: "He's not exactly my image of a university professor" Whoever wrote that, Thank you - it's just about the nicest thing anyone's ever said about me.

So where do we go from here? I have one more year with both my choirs and then I am fully retired. Connie is planning to retire at the same time. We don't intend to buy the trailer in Desert Hot Springs or play the piano at the rest home....yet. 3 years ago, Connie and I spent the Fall in South Africa and had one of the most wonderful experiences of our lives, just the two of us, tooling around in little car from white city to black township, hearing some of the most exciting choral singing imagineable. We'll do lots more of that kind of travelling. Who knows, Connie might teach a course in Rock and Roll for the Choral Singer and I might teach a course in anger management.....

In closing, I want to offer a plea to you all. Don't forget us. Send us e-mails about what you're up to. Even though we were blessed by such a wonderful daughter, you are our family. I'm going to write a book about the Chamber Singers - you could help immensely by sending me any anecdotes or memories of your time with our group. I wish you all happy lives and fulfilling careers. Most of all, I wish you a partner as wonderful as Connie has been for almost 40 years.

How do I sum it all up - the word that comes to mind is Love. I loved you all (some more than others), but anyone who endured me for a year became a very special person to me and my heart will always warm with the incredible memories.



ANCIENT HISTORY:
Bruce's 1968/69 Vassar College Madrigal Singers
(Is that Meryl Streep?)



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