

# Noteworthy

SPRING / SUMMER 2011

**NOTEWORTHY**

*Noteworthy is the official publication of the Manitoba Choral Association.*

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## 90 HOUR GIVING CHALLENGE IS A SUCCESS

Manitoba Choral Association took part in the 90 hour giving challenge in celebration of the 90th Anniversary of the Winnipeg Foundation. The giving challenge gave MCA the opportunity to grow their Endowment Fund through the raising of money through online giving 6 a.m. April 18 – midnight April 21. The Foundation provided incentive by

contributing to the funds based on the number, and total dollar amount, received by each one. Through the generous giving of the MCA membership and friends and the matching monies from the Winnipeg Foundation, we were able to raise **\$4377.12**.

Many thanks to those individuals who helped to make this venture a success!

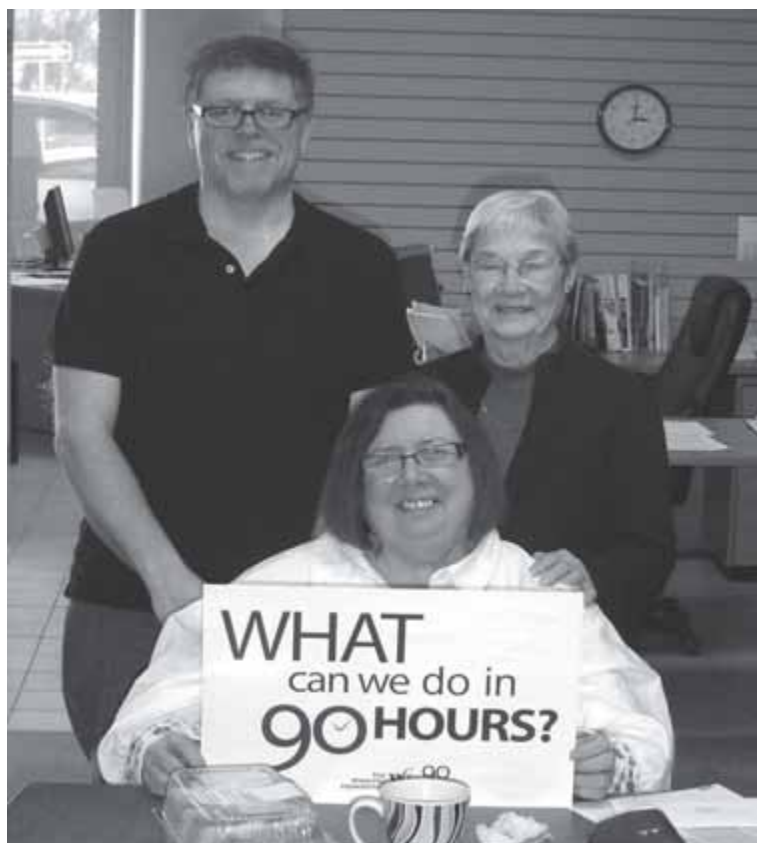


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***MCA President, Frances Seaton, Executive Director, Robert Neufeld and Former Executive Director, Audrey Nutter at the 90 Hour Challenge Workbee***

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# Noteworthy thanks this edition's contributors:

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# Why I Loved the Kings Singers Concert

By Chris Kayler

The King's Singers performed in Winnipeg this past Sunday (March 13, 2011), and I so enjoyed myself during the concert, I want to list a few reasons why I felt this way. Music-making of that caliber is rare, and I think we'd do well to savor the memory of it.

- Easy things to start off - perfection of tuning. I never \*once\* thought to myself that any one note was out of place.
- Impeccable ensemble - I am still learning how much trust and release is required to have a moment of brilliant togetherness, and they had scads of them in every song. One of the most thrilling things to see, again and again, was how they all just breathed to start a song, with no one singer leading.
- Blend - their mouths were rarely ever in the same shape, but their vowels were always so carefully matched with each other's. They must spend hours crafting each and every sound.
- Programming - varied and engaging. Even when they ventured into more popular styles, they managed to remain true to themselves and to the music.
- Memorization - their use of stands didn't detract from their communication, and when they sang off-book, they were that much more engaging.
- Rapport with audience - their spoken dialogue was informative and well-distributed amongst all 6 members, and even when it was obviously planned-out, it wasn't ever stilted or condescending.
- Technique - though I understood nearly every word they said, I was never aware of diction, and though they sang awfully well, I never saw "singer face" onstage (I hope you know what I mean; I use the term with all affection :D).
- Humour - what they chose to do for comic effect while singing and speaking was totally effective but still understated.
- Although they were totally homogeneous as a group, you could still see flashes of personality and idiosyncrasy now and



*The Kings Singers*

again, which made them that much more watch-able and listen-able.

- Afterwards, they were all talkative and sincerely friendly, even though they've been touring the world since late January and had to be in North Carolina the next night! They were genuinely appreciative of our attendance and support.
- I realized that on this worldwide tour, they're presenting multiple programs with no overlap in their first halves, and they choose the selections for the second half seemingly on the fly from a vast catalogue - imagine the memory work!
- In an age where anybody can sound amazing with post-production effects, they truly sound just as good live as they do in studio - not many artists can do that.
- Considering they perform in the most famous halls around the world, I very

much appreciated that they brought their A-game to (in the world's eyes) a small city.

- I have seldom been to any event that gave me so much joy and fulfillment. Simply being in the presence of such excellence, I was smiling like an idiot the entire time (my face hurt by the end of the first half!), and thinking of it to this day puts me in a semi-euphoric state. In some way, I feel like I was made a better person by their concert.
- In an age of instant Internet fame, talent-scouting (and "reality") TV programs, and manufactured one-hit wonders, it is so inspiring to see a group whose membership has entirely changed at least 3 times over 40 years, yet is still committed to hard work, stylistic growth, outreach, and excellence (and which, dare I say, is getting better with age).

# Annual Seniors' ChoirFest

Steinbach 55 Plus Seniors Centre and the Steinbach 55 Plus Choir hosted the Annual Seniors ChoirFest on Tuesday, May 3rd, 2011 at the Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church in Steinbach, Manitoba.

Four choirs participated in this event. They included the following MCA member choirs:

Winkler Seniors' Choir directed by Wes

Hamm and accompanied by Ruth Derksen as well as special guests, the SRSS Chamber Choir directed by Kristel Peters. Other choirs participating were the Altona Seniors' Choir directed by Hilda Franz and accompanied by Tena Giesbrecht as well as the host choir, the Steinbach 55 Plus Seniors' Choir directed by David Wiebe and accompanied by Ev-

elyn Goertzen. MCA Executive Director, Robert Neufeld, accompanied several of the choirs on the organ. The evening culminated with several mass choir pieces which were directed by Wes Hamm and accompanied by Ruth Derksen

Congratulations to Steinbach 55 Plus for organizing this successful choral event!



*Annual Seniors' ChoirFest Mass Choir*

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## NOTEWORTHY IS LOOKING FOR A NEW MANAGING EDITOR!

The MCA desires a person who is comfortable coordinating the various aspects of putting together *Noteworthy*. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Preparing and organizing a *Noteworthy* draft for both the March and November publication dates including setting deadlines for contributing writers
- Creating and captioning photos to accompany submissions into *Noteworthy*
- Working closely with the printers, the

MCA Executive Director, the MCA Marketing and Communications Chair and the MCA Graphic Designer to put together the final copy of *Noteworthy*

- Summarizing *Noteworthy* expenses to submit for annual budgeting purposes
- Participation in MCA activities when requested

The *Noteworthy* editor is required to have at least a basic proficiency in word

processing, email and image editing and have access to a computer. Past newsletter editors, copies of previous newsletters and the election/appointment mechanism will be available as a resource.

The Managing Editor position is a volunteer position, which will be filled upon recommendation of the MCA Marketing Chair and approval from the MCA Board of Directors from the list of applicants.

# INTERLAKE SINGS

By *Brenda Chorney*

On a wintery Wednesday evening, February 23, 2011, approximately 40 singers gathered together for the second annual Interlake Sings event. Any and all singers from all over the Interlake Region were invited to this event at Selkirk United

Church in Selkirk for an evening of singing through Manitoba Choral Association repertoire. Under the extraordinarily capable, patient and encouraging guidance of Maureen Ferley, these singers sang, laughed and learned their way through ninety minutes of var-

ied musical repertoire. Interlake's own Leanne Gilbert accompanied our evening of song and special thanks goes to Robert Neufeld and Frances Seaton for attending this event. Following the singing, participants stayed and enjoyed refreshments.

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## BU Chorale and Stonewall Collegiate Choirs Perform Together

By *Kendra Obach*

Brandon University Chorale and Stonewall Collegiate Choirs came together on February 20th in Stony Mountain to share their music with each other and the Interlake. Stony Mountain United Church was filled with an enthusiastic audience, overflowing into the lobby, who came to hear both choirs perform music from Canada, Cuba, Africa and nations in between.

Brandon Chorale was on their way to Cuba and, wanting one last performance before the big tour, made a stop in the Interlake. When asked if we might be able to host and share the concert, the choirs at SCI were thrilled to do it! The Chorale, SCI senior and chamber choirs each

performed individually as well as joining together for two selections. The choirs gathered in the afternoon to rehearse before the collaborative event in the evening. The students of the collegiate were in awe of the skill and musicality of the Chorale and certainly benefitted from the opportunity of working with Dr. Dagenais and singing alongside the university's talent.

This concert was extra special to host in the Interlake as there are many connections between the Brandon and Stonewall choral programs. Before becoming the choral director at Stonewall Collegiate, I finished my B.Mus at Brandon University under the direction of Dr. Dagenais.

Having sung with the chorale for many years, I was proud to have the chance to work with them and thrilled for the students at the collegiate to have this opportunity. Among the singers in the chorale were two students who have recently graduated from Stonewall Collegiate and have continued studies in choral music education at Brandon University. What a thrill to see my former students singing in this ensemble! This concert not only provided a chance for these local singers to perform in their home community, but also to show the younger singers what is possible. These connections truly made the concert a special event for our community!



*BU Chorale and SCI Choir with Conductor, Andrée Dagenais*



*BU Chorale with conductor, Andrée Dagenais*



*SCI Choir with conductor, Kendra Obach*

# How I Learned to Play a Clave Pattern

By Roberta Matheson

On February 21, 2011, Brandon University Chorale woke up bright and early and was at the airport by 4 a.m. in order to travel to Cuba. After a year of planning, fundraising and organizing, the moment was finally here. Twenty-two singers and Dr. Andrée Dagenais went to Havana for a week of singing.

Cuba is a country rich in culture, and the arts figure predominantly. It has six professional choirs, and music is evident in many aspects of the daily life of Cubans. It was not uncommon to see people singing on the street corner with a Tres (Cuban guitar), set of claves or maracas accompanying a singer. I was so impressed that music was for everyone, no one said, "I can't sing" or "I can't dance"; everyone just did it. I was highly impressed with how naturally people feel rhythm! They would just start moving to the music, and did not have to think when adding clapping patterns such as a clave pattern. I can proudly say that since that week, I can now play a clave pattern without even thinking! Although, while trying to clap with songs on the radio, it still takes some effort.

One of the things I was most impressed with in Cuba was the fact that Cuban music was everywhere. Everyone knew traditional Cuban music, and they were interested in hearing us sing it. In Cuba, it is possible to study folk music at university. They do not perform and sing solely classical music. I wish we would relate more to our own folk music. I wish that Canadian folk music would be more popular and that we would hear and perform it more. Music is not a part of Canadian culture in the same way that it is in Cuba. Cubans could start singing a song without having to think about it. If one person begins a song, others can easily join in by singing or improvising a rhythmic pattern. When we were asked about the style of our Canadian folk mu-

sic, it was hard to describe. Often, what we sing in school and what we listen to is not the same type of music. I feel as though our preference of music may have been misinterpreted with what we studied.

Throughout our wonderful tour, I learned much about myself and about music from around the world. I left every rehearsal and performance feeling encouraged and inspired. We met and shared with four choirs (Vocal Leo, Coralina, Vocal Luna, the choir from the Institut Superior des Artes) and the vocal jazz ensemble, Novel Voz. We had the opportunity to perform for each ensemble, and receive coaching on Cuban pieces we had been working on in Canada. After the workshops, we had the chance to chat and get to know the singers. Two ensembles we met, Coralina and the ensemble from I.S.A. performed in the gala concert with us on Thursday Evening. This concert was such a fantastic experience and after it happened our choir was on Cloud Nine. We were ecstatic! We also had the opportunity to perform with one of the choirs we met, 'Coralina' singing three Cuban pieces.

We danced during one of the songs, and I will never forget how much help I needed to learn the simple choreography. During the rehearsal, the alto beside me got tired of me looking at her feet and reminded me to look up by tapping my chin. I remember the feeling once we finished that song in the concert. I felt so encouraged by the audience, which mainly consisted of choirs that we had met throughout the week. I was so proud about being part of BU Chorale, and what we have accomplished in such a small time.

I also learned much about myself as a choral conductor. Rhythms, although difficult, should not scare me. I need to work hard, but it is important to feel the rhythm. Traveling with a choir is a possibility when teaching. I believe tours like these are essential in developing musicians. It is great to build networks with other musicians. I am so glad to have traveled with BU Chorale to Cuba this year. For many singers, this is our last year in the choir and I feel there is no better way to say good-bye to this ensemble!



*Brandon University Chorale in Cuba*

# Manitobans Shine in Alberta!

Four Manitoba choral musicians crossed paths in Calgary on March 19, 2011 at the Alberta South ChoralFest. Elroy Friesen was one of the guest adjudicators at the

festival and Karla Ferguson, Naomi Russell and Sandy Jasper were participating in a ChoralFest Spotlight concert as members of the Canadian Chamber Choir. The CCC

toured to Red Deer, Edmonton, Rosebud and Calgary during their week-long Alberta tour, participating in numerous workshops and concerts.



*Karla Ferguson,  
Naomi Russell,  
Elroy Friesen and  
Sandy Jasper  
at Alberta South  
ChoralFest*

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## Cuban Culture

*By Riley Woods*

On our last full day in Cuba, the Brandon University chorale, directed by Andree Dagenais was given the opportunity to experience Cuban culture and the arts first hand. Our last day was a long one, and to be completely honest the last thing I wanted to do that day was to have another performance.

That is until we pulled up to the Casa de Cultura in the municipality called Arroyo Naranjo. This municipality represents 11% of the province of Havana. The municipality alone has three "Houses of Culture," which are equivalent to our community centers.

It was awkward at first, pulling up to this beautiful building with people everywhere and not really knowing the game plan. The crowd consisted of not just children, but their parents, siblings, and teenagers too. It was as if everyone in a five-block radius

was there to see us. The first thing we heard when we arrived was music. The first two things we saw were a Canadian flag hung next to a Cuban flag and smiles from everyone around.

Without much knowledge of what exactly was ahead for us, we got up in front of the crowd that had formed into an audience and began our program. It did not matter what language we were singing in, nor the style of music... they loved it, truly loved it. These people were not musicians, they were not appreciating our phrasing or if we got every chord perfect. They appreciated what we were doing simply because it was music. Music provided a common ground for both parties.

After we had performed our last piece, we were seated in chairs to face "the stage" and the next show began. Oh Canada was the first thing we heard, and it was being

played by a local resident who had been coming to the House of Culture since he was young. It was at this moment that I started crying, and I was not alone. They loved us for being there, and we loved them back. We were privileged enough to hear solo singers, choirs, guitar ensembles, and to see a wide variety of dancers of all ages. After the last dance we had an impromptu dance party to the music of Justin Bieber. We had mini dance offs, took pictures and then had to say our goodbyes.

Personally, this last day was the day that changed my thoughts on many things. Especially in terms of community involvement in music and music education as a whole. Seeing how the arts, and music especially can change a person and bring a community together was magical. Culture, music, and dancing brought us all together.

# Loretta Thorleifson, Vice President of MCA, shares her MC remarks – Provincial Honour Choirs 2011

Good afternoon friends of choral music! It's PHC weekend, and I can feel the love! My name is Loretta Thorleifson, and as the MCA executive keeps reminding me, I am the vice-president of the Manitoba Choral Association. But more importantly today, I am a lover of singing.

I was driving home one evening pondering how to approach my MC duties this year, while I listened to "Ideas" on CBC. That's what I need, I thought, an idea. My mind wandered to "Ideas" host Lister Sinclair's famous series, "A is for Aardvark". That's it, I thought, a Manitoba singer's alphabet! For example:

**A** could be for alleluia! It's also for alto, and Audrey Nutter, a lifetime member of MCA, and a person who works on the theory that energy is inversely proportional to size. **A** is for acknowledgements – see page 8 of your program for a list of people and organizations who made this weekend possible. On a roll, I carried on . . .

**B** is for Bach and Beethoven. It's also for Bass, baritone and Bert Kroeker, advocate for choral music in Manitoba for decades.

**C** is for choir of course, and conductors. We are living in a golden age of conductors here in Manitoba; all you have to do is look at page 4 of your program to confirm that. **C** is for cellphones which we set on 'silent' during concerts so they don't ring during an emotional pause. **C** is also for CMYC and Choral-fest, and for Catherine Robbins, conductor of the Junior Choir, which is going to start things off for us right now!

**D** is for duet and dynamics, and also for Diane Loomer, whom we are delighted to have with us this weekend. **D** is also for Daniel McIntyre Collegiate, which came through at the last minute with choral risers for today's concert.

**E** is for EMYC and also for Elroy Fri-

esen whom we are so honored to have conducting the Senior High Mixed Choir this weekend!

**F** is for forte, and also for Francis Seaton, president of Manitoba Choral Association!

**G** is for Gordon Bell High School, which has so graciously hosted PHC for years and years now.

**H** is for harmony, also for hymns and hymnbooks, those wonderful volumes which my mom used to let me make forts out of in the back pews on Sunday mornings, so I would be quiet during Dad's sermons. Later in life, I would look through those same volumes for words of inspiration, praise, and comfort. **H** is also for Henry Engbrecht, one of the fathers of choral music in Manitoba and a founding member of MCA.

**I** is for intervals, and intonation.

**J** is for jazz.

**K** is for key signatures, based on that mathematically beautiful circle of fifths.

**L** is for lasagna, which no one wants to see for about a month after a youth choir tour.

**M** is for, what else, music. It's also for the Manitoba Choral Association and for the motto, Manitoba Sings! **M** is for metronome, which, contrary to popular belief, is not a short person who lives in the subway.

**N** is for notes of course.

**O** is for opera, and oratorios.

**P** is for all the practice which comes before the performance, where you hope your choir will stay on pitch. **P** is also for PHC and the hardworking committee of volunteers, headed up by Marilyn Redekop, who made this weekend possible. If you look on page 10 of your program, you will see the complete list.

**Q** is for quintet, or if they don't all show up, it could also be for quartet.

**R** is for rhythm, especially on the djembe during a rousing South Afri-

can freedom song. **R** is also for Robert Neufeld, executive director of MCA and organist extraordinaire!

**S** is for sopranos and for SNL. **S** is for sponsors – see page 10 for three generous ones. **S** is also for Stuart Sladden, who just had us dancing through a girl's garden with the byrds all winter long! **S** is for sectional leaders who helped out with rehearsals this weekend. But **S** is mostly for what brings us all together today - singing – that truly supernatural force which creates sound out of silence, harmony out of discord, friends out of strangers, and unity out of diversity.

**T** is for tenor and tempo.

**U** is for unison.

**V** is for voice of course, and for vocalise and Vivaldi's Gloria.

**W** is for Warmups and Westman Youth Choir. **W** is also for websites, like Manitobasings.org, where you can go to order your copies of the CD and photographs of today's concert.

**X** – I'll bet you thought I was going to say something predictable like xylophone – ha wrong – it's for Xavier Rudd. So cool, and I have just upped my hip factor with the Senior High Choir.

**Y** is for youth choirs, those life changing experiences for literally thousands of high school students over the past 27 years. **Y** is also for yoiking, which we will soon hear.

**Z** could be for Zamphir but that would be cruel – just kidding – ask your parents. **Z** could also be for zydeco, but we would need an accordion for that, and my social life is hanging by too thin a thread to bring mine out. So it really stands for singing with zest, zip, and zeal, as the Senior High Choir will now demonstrate.

Thank you for sharing this afternoon with us! Thank you for coming to the concert, thank you for supporting music, and most of all, thank you for singing!

# Provincial Honour Choirs 2011

Provincial Honour Choirs 2011 took place February 4 – 6, 2011. 225 singers from all over Manitoba converged at Gordon Bell High School for rehearsals, food and friendship.

Four excellent choirs were formed which were led by outstanding conductors. The Junior Choir was directed by Catherine Robbins and accompanied by Adriane Neufeld. The Women's Chorus was directed by Stuart Sladden and accompanied by Mark Kolt. The Senior High Choir was directed by Elroy Friesen and accompanied by Chris Kayler. The Adult Choir was directed by Diane Loomer and accompanied by Cary Denby.

The weekend culminated with a Gala Concert on Sunday afternoon to a capacity crowd at Knox United Church. There was excitement in the air! All choirs performed with excellence! The afternoon reached a glorious conclusion with the combination of the choirs and audience learning and singing a new song together. It was the epitome of one of MCA slogans – **Manitoba Sings!**



*PHC Adult Choir*



*PHC Women's Chorus*



*PHC Junior Choir*



*PHC Senior Choir*



*PHC Committee: Marilyn Redekop, Cynthia Peyson Wahl, Corinne Villebrun, Sonya Williams, Robert Neufeld, Frances Seaton, Dorothy Ryan*

## PHC 2011 Reflections with Diane Loomer

When MCA's Executive Director, Robert Neufeld, asked me to come and conduct the Adult Honor Choir I was very pleased to accept. I knew with Manitoba's strong singing tradition and MCA's national reputation for generous volunteerism and thorough organization, I'd find a welcoming choir of good, earnest, experienced singers. I also knew I'd find an organizing committee that was caring and supportive - always anticipating the musician's needs. I was not disappointed! These people love to make music and for a conductor, that's sheer joy. As I listened to the various choirs and their musical results at Sunday's concert I was reminded of how fortunate we are to be immersed in a rich and generous culture of music. Even the carillon bells rang in spontaneous, exuberant celebration!



*Diane Loomer*

# Canadian Mennonite University 10th Anniversary Choral Concert

By Rudy Schellenberg, Associate Professor of Music

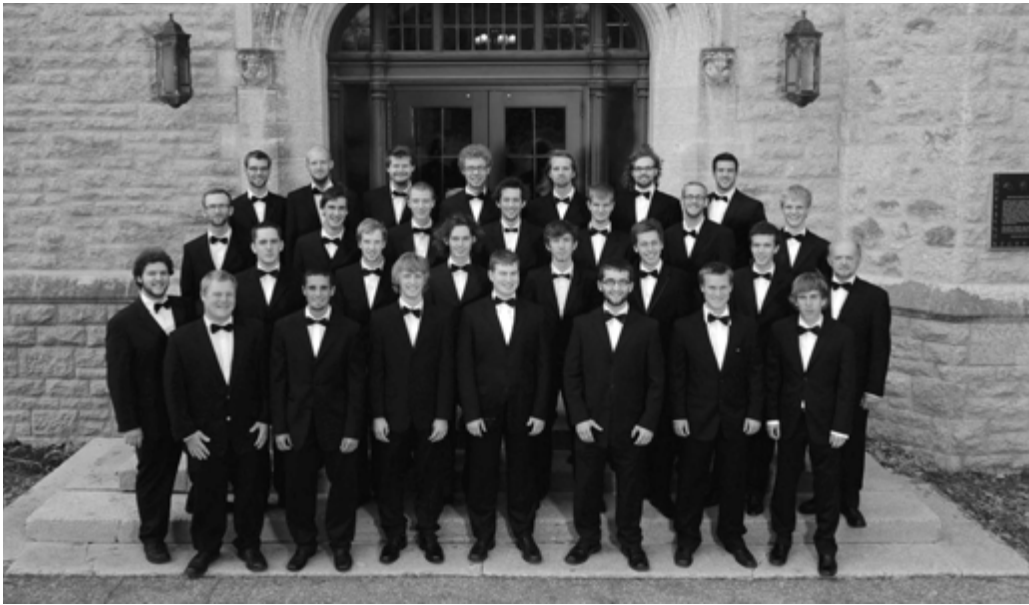
Every important celebration calls for a good sing! Canadian Mennonite Univer-

sity's School of Music did precisely that when it celebrated the university's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a choral concert in Winnipeg's Westminster United Church on

March 26, 2011. Featured were four of its choirs: the 18-voice Chamber Choir and 50-voice Women's Chorus conducted by Janet Brenneman, as well as the 27-voice Men's Chorus and 40-voice Singers led by Rudy Schellenberg. The two mixed choirs combined to premiere a 5 minute a cappella piece commissioned for this occasion entitled *What Does The Lord Require Of You?* Ontario composer Jeff Enns provided an imaginative and compelling musical setting of this poem by American Mennonite poet Jean Janzen. CMU thanks the Foundation for Choral Music in Manitoba for its support of this commission.

The concert, based on the themes of Hope, Faith, Life, Love was representative of the wide variety of choral works CMU choirs sing. The rich fare of composers included Palestrina, Bach, Whitacre, Pärt, Tor- mis, Gjeilo as well as a selection of rousing spirituals with foot stomping and hand clapping.

Another significant event for CMU's combined choirs this year included the Canadian premiere of *The Seven Gates of Jerusalem* by the contemporary Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki together with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra at its recent Music Festival. During Holy Week the mixed choirs each embark on an annual singing tour. The CMU Chamber Choir will travel to the northern USA and Ontario while the CMU Singers will perform in parts of SK and AB. The choirs can be heard on two CD's: *On Earth as is Heaven* (2004) and *hope, faith, life, love* (2007).



*CMU Men's Choir with Conductor, Rudy Schellenberg*



*CMU Women's Chorus with Conductor, Janet Brenneman*

# Sing Better As You Age: A Comprehensive Guide for Adult Choral Singers

By Victoria Meredith  
Santa Barbara Music Publishing, Inc.  
(2007)  
ISBN 0-9648071-6-5

This book is addressed to both the adult singer who would like to keep his/her voice in shape and to the choral conductor who may have an increasing number of mature voices in the choir. It offers solid information on what happens as the body and the voice ages and guidelines for vocal conditioning and re-conditioning. Based on Dr. Victoria Meredith's recent research and

work with more mature voices, the book also works as an interactive workbook, with suggested warm-up routines and room to create more. Much of the information in the book is valuable for any beginner singer or conductor, no matter the age. And yes, the print is large enough for those of us who have moved on to reading glasses. The author is well known to ACCC members as a former president and frequent contributor to Anacrusis.

Reviewed by Patricia Abbott, former Executive Director of ACCC.



Victoria Meredith

## Winnipeg Music Festival

### Choral Trophy Recipients

Congratulations to all the choirs that participated in the Winnipeg Music Festival.

MCA is very proud of the following trophy recipients - all of them are MCA Members.  
Beth Douglas Memorial Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance by a School Chorus in a Concert Group

#### – WSD Junior High Divisional Choir

Earl Grey Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance of a School Chorus in Grades 7 to Senior 4

#### – DMCI Chamber Choir

Helga Anderson Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance by an Adult Community Choir

#### – Rainbow Harmony Project

J.S. Little Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance of a Folk Song by a School Chorus in Grades 5-12

#### – Westwood Collegiate Concert Choir

John B. Somerset Shield  
for the most outstanding performance by a Youth Community Choir, 16 years and under

#### – St. James Assiniboia Junior Concert Choir

Lieutenant Governor's Trophy  
for the most outstanding solo or group performance during the Festival

#### – DMCI Chamber Choir

Lord Tweedsmuir Memorial Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance by a Children's Community Choir, 12 years and under

#### – Louis Riel Divisional Treble Choir

Mr. & Mrs. Will Rook Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance by a School Girls Chorus, Kindergarten to Grade 6

#### – Whyte Ridge Girls' Choir

Salisbury House Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance by a School Classroom Choir, Grades 7-12

#### – Westwood Collegiate Choral Majors



Rainbow Harmony Project Wins Helga Anderson Trophy Again!

Saults & Pollard Limited Shield  
for the most outstanding performance by a Youth Community Choir, 16 and 19 years & under

#### – St. James Assiniboia Senior Concert Choir

Walter Klymkiw Trophy  
for the most outstanding performance of a folk or multilingual song by a Community Choir

– Pembina Trails Voices - Cantemus  
Congratulations!

# Vancouver Chamber Choir 40th Anniversary Tour

The Manitoba Choral Association and the University of Manitoba Singers hosted the Vancouver Chamber Choir (VCC) on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 and Wednesday, March 2, 2011 at the Crescent Fort Rouge United Church. The Vancouver Chamber Choir is Canada's outstanding professional vocal ensemble. Based on the Pacific Coast in British Columbia, conductor Jon Washburn and his twenty singers are noted for their diverse repertoire and performing excellence. The ensemble has gained international distinction through tours to the United States, China, Hong Kong, Finland, Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The choir's assistant conductor is John Trotter and their general manager is Violet Goosen.

Four aspiring conductors, including Kendra Obach, Cynthia Wahl, Jorge Hidalgo and Stuart Sladden, took part in a conductors workshop on Tuesday, March 1, 2011. Each conductor prepared a choral piece to conduct with the VCC and had the great opportunity of gaining conducting insights from conductor, Jon Washburn.

The Vancouver Chamber Choir performed for an enthusiastic audience on Wednesday, March 2, 2011. It was cold and crisp outside but the atmosphere was

warm and friendly as the VCC performed a concert of classics as well as an abundance of Canadian music. The choir is known for its performances and premiers of the music of Canadian composers. The second half of the concert included several pieces performed jointly by the University of Manitoba Singers, conducted by Elroy Friesen, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

The Vancouver Chamber Choir made concert performances in Steinbach and Killarney as well.

Bravo to the Vancouver Chamber Choir on a successful 40 years of choral excellence!



*Vancouver Chamber Choir*

# Well Deserved Recognition



Jan Burdon received some well deserved recognition for her service to the Manitoba Choral Association at the April meeting of the MCA Board. Jan has served tirelessly as a volunteer and has served on several MCA com-

mittees as well as 'doing her time' as the MCA Vice President, President and Past President. We look forward to utilizing Jan's many talents for years to come.

Bravo Jan!

*Jan Burdon receives Well Deserved Recognition*

# DMCI Chamber Choir awarded Lieutenant Governor's Trophy at Winnipeg Music Festival

## What a performance!

The 12 singers from Daniel McIntyre Collegiate who make up the DMCI Chamber Choir under the direction of MCA Board Member Cynthia Peyson Wahl received the highest honour possible from the Winnipeg Music Festival. The choir was awarded the Earl Grey Trophy for the most outstanding performance of a School Chorus in Grades 7 to Senior 4 and were invited to perform at the Festival's Gala Concert on Sunday, March 20, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. After their stellar performance of *Sá Skimrande Var Aldrig Havet*, arr. Edenroth and *Il est bel et bon* by Pierre Passereau, it was announced that they had also been awarded the prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Trophy. This trophy is awarded annually for the most outstanding solo or group performance during the Festival. Yes, the very best of the best! Congratulations Cynthia and Choir!

## About the Trophy

The Honorable Errick F. Willis donated the Lieutenant Governor's Trophy to the Winnipeg Music Festival in 1963. At times referred to in the past as the Errick F. Willis trophy, the Lieutenant

Governor's trophy is awarded annually for the most outstanding solo or group performance during the Festival.

Errick French Willis was born in Boissevain, Manitoba in 1896. He was educated at the Universities of Toronto, Manitoba and Alberta. He sat for twenty-four years in the Manitoba Legislature as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and as a cabinet minister in both the coalition governments of John Bracken and Premier Duff Roblin's administration. In 1948 he became Deputy Provincial Premier and remained in that office until 1950. He was appointed Lieutenant Governor on January 15, 1959. Both Mr. Willis and his wife, Louise, will long be remembered for their interest in and ardent support of youth and cultural activities. They were frequent visitors to the Winnipeg Music Festival, both in an official and unofficial capacity.



*DMCI Chamber Choir*

## Previous choirs to receive the Lieutenant Governor's Trophy:

- 1963 Daniel McIntyre Collegiate
- 1964 St. George's Anglican Church Choir
- 1965 Mennonite Brethren Bible College
- 1969 Mennonite Children's Choir
- 1970 Brock-Corydon School
- 1971 Kelvin High School
- 1974 Kelvin High School
- 1976 Winnipeg Girls Senior Choir
- 1994 Kelvin Girls' Chamber Ensemble

# WestMan Youth Choir Reviews

*As told by two participating choristers.*

**BRAEDEN MCBURNEY (GRADE 12)**  
- VINCENT MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL

The experience of being in the Westman Youth Choir is quite hard to actually put into words. It was unbelievable and uncomparable; the only issue is that it was not unending. The very first night of the first retreat, everyone was surprised to learn that we would in fact be starting our lessons that night. After getting the music and seeing the amount we had to learn, everyone started stressing out then that it would not be done.

As the first retreat passed though and everyone returned to school, the Westmaners would all just count the days together until the next retreat; no one wanted school, we all wanted our escape from life; be around our new friends; spend all day and night singing. When the second retreat came finally, no one was stressing anymore; we almost had all of our music learned then. Those three days were spent tweaking and memorizing. And by the end of the third day, everyone was jumping with excitement; the next meeting would be for the tour.

When that Saturday *finally* rolled around, we got straight to work perfectly before our first concert that very night. The irony was that the time in between each retreat seemed to go on forever; when you were finally there though, it seemed as if you had just left, and nothing had changed. Our first concert was a little rocky, but we performed well, and everyone loved it. Sunday came and went, as we refreshed ourselves on little bits here and there in between our performances. And, we could all see it, as each concert passed, we were getting better and better, stronger and stronger as a group.

By Monday, we were at our prime, and showing every town we visited what it meant to be the best of the best. After our final concert that night though, there was a lingering silence in the celebrating. The next day ended in our biggest concert yet... but it would also be our last.

Tuesday morning was spent having as much fun as we could, though no one would say it out loud, it was our final day together. That morning after Rivers, many of us were excited to finally be going home to perform for our friends and family. The brick wall hit when we final-

ly arrived in Brandon though; we were coming in as a group, but we weren't leaving that way. Suddenly, no one was happy to be back home.

The afternoon concert came and went, but there was no celebrating after this one. Everyone was tired, and even more so, very sad. An hour was spent just being quiet and resting for our final performance. Supper that night wasn't very talkative, and everyone was feeling anxious for the final concert that was only hours away.

Once we were ready to perform, we had a meeting before we went out. We just sat in our final free moment as the Youth Choir, and speeches were given from the directors. The tension finally broke then as everyone began to drop tears they'd been holding in. They were quickly wiped away with words of comfort and excitement, and we pumped ourselves up one last time to give the best performance of the tour, by no possible comparison.

After our processional though, it became apparent to me that this concert was going to be the hardest performance I've ever had to give. And indeed it was; the entire concert I was trying to keep my voice from breaking and my eyes dry. Odd feeling for me to experience, someone who hasn't shed a tear in years.

By the intermission, everyone was solemn, and we presented gifts we had gotten to our directors and accompanist. After one final group hug, we went back out to finish the concert, and go out with a bang. Fighting emotion was harder for everyone this time though, and tears came out frequently from about half of the group. By the end of Wavin' Flag, everyone was ready to break; right as Finale B started, everyone did.

That song, I don't know what happened, but it just snapped all control I previously had. I thought I was alone with this too, and was afraid to turn around to the audience, until I heard



*Western Manitoba Youth Choir*

someone behind me. *Then* I realized that, looking around, everyone was crying together, at once. I think that simple fact, coupled with the thought of singing our finale for the final time in our lives, was just too overwhelming, and everyone broke under it.

After the concert, no one wanted to leave, but simply be with our friends that we might never see again. After I left, and after I *finally* stopped crying after a half hour straight, I was able to focus properly and realize that those were memories I would never lose. The fact that it was over was depressing, but that thought was comforting. Though even today (which in reality is only like a week and a half later) I still can't listen to Wavin' Flag, Sure On This Shining Night, Under The Bridge or Finale B without having to turn it off, lest I start crying again.

All in all, I tried using a lot of words (see above 6 or whatever paragraphs) to capture what I felt, but it still feels inadequate. All I can say is that it is unlike anything I've ever (or ever will, I know this for sure) experienced; the bond and tightness we all felt together is uncomparable to anything I can even imagine.

**AIMEE JOHNSTON - GRADE 12 - VINCENT MASSEY HIGH SCHOOL**

The first thing I noticed when I arrived at the first 2010 Westman Youth Choir camp was the range of people involved. At the camp that first weekend there was not just the choir members- there were staff members from the camp itself, there were chaperones all ready to supervise us rowdy choristers as we spread across the front lawn, there were also board members and previous choral members there, socializing and helping out where they could. That's when the thought first crept into my mind- this choir was so much more than just an auditioned group of singers from across Manitoba. But how could something this simple, just a bunch of teenagers in grades ten, eleven and twelve, singing their hearts out mean anything more than what it was? I was about to find out.

The first weekend was tough- it was

my first year in Westman, while simultaneously my last. I was encouraged to audition last year by my friend, but I didn't feel I was confident enough to go through with an audition for the choir. So when I arrived at the camp that weekend, a lot of the returning choristers were already happily talking amongst themselves and I felt outnumbered and very nervous. The thing that surprised me though, was the warmth and happiness I received as I stepped into some of the circles already formed. Everyone said hello, asked me who I was and where I was from, and smiled. There was no exclusion or coldness directed at me or any other new persons at all, just cheeriness that we were all there, and annoyance at the mosquito population.

The music that we sang was phenomenal, and you could tell that everyone in the choir knew what they were doing. The first time we sang the song "Requiem", everyone in the room got shivers. We were that good. This choir was the cream of the crop from all over Western Manitoba, and it showed. However, the music was difficult. A few of the songs, we had to work on continuously through the first and second weekends, and even some during the tour. It was all worth it though, when we sang those first notes of "Requiem" for the first concert in Virden.

The second weekend, we worked hard. A lot of people went home from both camps with no voices, but we all left with a lasting hug on our heart that still hasn't gone away to this day. We fine-tuned our repertoire; we went over the songs countless times- so much, that when we performed for the parents at the end of the second camp, more than three quarters of our songs were memorized. It felt amazing, to know that we had accomplished so much in such little amounts of time.

The tour, lasting four days, travelling to six communities in Westman area, was exhausting, both physically and emotionally. We were up at seven or earlier every morning, ready to get on the bus and get moving at 8:45 and singing at eleven. We did an evening concert every night, got to our billets homes around eleven,

and crashed for the night. Each night got harder and harder to keep together at the end, especially for some of the grade twelves, who had been in the choir for three years running. For me, I could see why everyone was trying to hold it together, fighting back tears at the end of the concerts, but it never really hit home for me. Yes, I was in the choir too, but this was only my first year- some of these people are never going to sing with the Westman Youth Choir again, and it would be devastating to them. I thought that if I started crying, I'd feel like I was lying because I didn't feel I'd experienced the true power of the choir's grasp.

At least, not until the last night did I start to feel something growing inside my chest. As we sang our second last song, "Wavin' Flag", I started to realize how amazing this group was. We were all teenagers, in a difficult time of our lives- dealing with schooling, graduation, and peer pressure, jobs- yet we all still managed to accept each other, laugh with each other, cry with each other, and believe in each other with all our faults. That was when it hit me- Westman Youth Choir was so much more than just an auditioned choir. It was a safe place of refuge, it was a family, and it was a caring, loving home. When we sang one of the lines of the last song, "Finale B" from the musical Rent, one of the lines stated, "I'd die without you." I cannot put into words how much power those simple words had when we sang them for our last concert. That is why I did what I said I was not going to do on the final concert: I cried. With tears rolling down our faces, emotions spilling over our hearts, we sang our last concert.

Looking back at it now, I cannot believe that I had even hesitated to audition for this life changing choir, but I can tell you this- this choir, this family, this home was an incredible and eye opening experience that I don't think could ever be replicated or repeated with any event that will ever happen to me. It was the 2010 Westman Youth Choir that taught me the power of music, and as cheesy as it sounds, the power of friendship.

# Central Manitoba Youth Choir 2010

By James Reynolds

CMYC had another fantastic tour this year. The group of fifty choristers toured central region from October 13th – 17th after two rehearsal weekends at Circle Square Ranch. Choristers thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with director, Carrie Schellenberg Wilson, and accompanist, Loren Hiebert. Both Carrie and Loren had a wonderful connection with the singers and were able to produce excellent results.

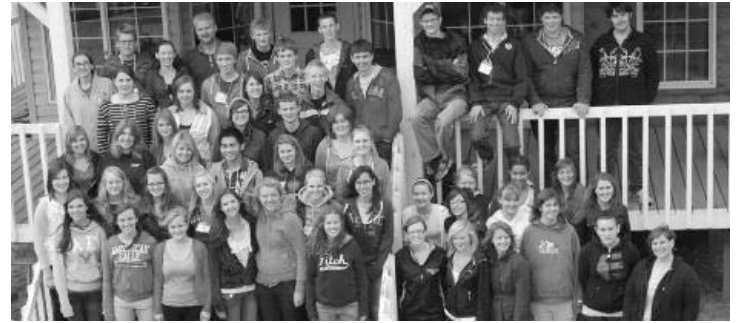
*CMYC was a career highlight for me! Each singer is a musician, so I was able to collaborate with them and the music-making was evident right from the first weekend. I didn't anticipate getting so attached to each of them...but I guess that's what happens when you share such an intensely beautiful experience. I am truly grateful for the opportunity. It has made me a better musician and teacher.*

Carrie

*CMYC is a little bit of heaven on earth for me.*

Loren

One of the highlights during the 13 concert tour was the joint concert with ECCO in Winnipeg. The choristers shared a wonderful experience. Many of their comments can be summarized with a quote from one singer:



Central Manitoba Youth Choir 2010

*The CMYC experience was absolutely amazing! To be able to sing in such a high-calibre choir along with the some of the most talented choristers in the province was an incredible privilege and blessing. The friendships and memories that were created during CMYC will stay with me forever!*

Amber

The Central Manitoba Choral Association is very grateful for the hospitality of hosting families, the hard work of the many volunteers who make the tour and rehearsal camps possible, and the generous financial contributions of many concert attendees.

# Eastman Youth Choir – 2010

By Shannon Sawatzky

Once again, the young singers in the Eastman region “did us proud!”

Thirty-six singers came together under the direction of Carolyn Boyes (Winnipeg), accompanied by Kim Bestvater-Sidorchuk for two intense weekends of music-making at Camp Assiniboia and Camp Arnes. Our region seems to grow each year; this year singers travelled from as far west as Kenora, Ontario, and as far south as Sprague.

Choristers enjoyed a whirlwind 4 day tour, kicking things off by performing in 3 schools in the region - Niverville, Blumenort and Ile des Chenes, as well as a Care Home in Beausejour. On Friday, singers partici-

pated in the School Workshop, and took part in the evening concert program.

A highlight for our choir each year is singing inside the Legislative building, which we did Saturday morning followed with a performance at Lindenwood Terrace in Winnipeg, and Paradise Village near Ste. Anne.

Crescent Fort Rouge United Church



EastMan Youth Choir 2010

were delighted to have us participate in the morning service on Sunday and provided our hungry singers with a wonderful lunch, which we followed with a quick bus trip to Landmark to set up and prepare for our Grand Finale Dessert Concert.

Millie Hildebrand chaired the evening program, and presented Shannon Sawatzky and Robert Neufeld each with a lovely plant arrangement and warm words of thanks for their years of service in co-ordinating the Youth Choir. Both will be stepping down, or at least becoming “less involved” in the coming years.

Another wonderful season come to a close!