



Fairfield County Children's Choir quarternotes

The Newsletter of the Fairfield County Children's Choir • Vol. 9, No. 1 • Fall 2008

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The FCCC Chamber Singers traveled to Independence Hall in Philadelphia during their summer tour in June, 2008. (Photo by Jon Noyes with thanks to Kathy Clair)

From the Music Director

Greetings! The 14th Season of the FCCC is off to a wonderful start. Our talented group of over 260 choristers is working with our dedicated staff to make great music together! As usual, we have an exciting concert series planned for this year, including our upcoming Winter Concert on December 14 at the Klein Memorial Auditorium in Bridgeport and our Broadway Concert and Auction on February 7. Our auction last year was the most exciting yet! Vacation getaways and myriad gift certificates are just some of the wonderful items we will be showcasing.

I am very excited to announce the release of our newest compact disc, a recording of Gospel music and spirituals entitled *This Is the Day*. Most of these pieces have been in the repertoire of the Fairfield County Children's Choir since our founding in 1995. This collection presents a live concert which was recorded on May 31, 2008 at the United Congregational Church in Bridgeport, Conn. You will find this CD to be energetic and uplifting!

You will notice on our concert calendar that the number of community service programs, in which our choristers use their talents to help others, has increased. We have been involved for many years with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and we have a longstanding commitment to two Holocaust Commemoration Services – rotating every other year at the JCCS service in Bridgeport and the municipal event in Fairfield. This is one example of how we are achieving one aspect of our mission – to contribute "to the quality of the cultural life of our members and the community as a whole."

I am again pleased to announce that the FCCC is the recipient of a grant from the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism. After a rigorous evaluation process which looked at all aspects of our organization and program, we are proud to continue to be recognized by the State of Connecticut as an outstanding cultural organization. The Commission reported that they were impressed with the level of singing, with our policy of accommodating children with special needs, and the commitment to relatively low tuition. Many thanks to Beau VILLECCO for making this happen!

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Finally, I would like to share with you our policy regarding the changing voice. The FCCC is a treble voice choir, that is, we primarily sing music written for soprano and alto voices. This "children's choir" model is very popular throughout the world and has enjoyed a Renaissance of sorts in the past 25-30 years. Children's choral singing has been around for centuries, of course, with the well known Vienna Boys Choir recently celebrating its 500th anniversary!

You may be aware that boy's voices undergo a dramatic change somewhere around the ages of 10 – 16. You may not know that girl's voices also experience a similar, but less pronounced, change. This voice change is actually a growth spurt in the larynx, where boy's vocal cords grow and thicken about one full *centimeter*, while girl's vocal cords only grow and thicken approximately 2-4 *millimeters*. The large change in boys results in a lowering of the voice range of about one octave, to the ranges of tenor, baritone or bass.

For treble voice choirs, this presents a challenge. Traditionally, many choirs simply ask the boys to leave when their voices change. In our case, we have a number of boys who have expressed to me that they would like to stay with us because they love the music we sing. Thus, our policy is that boys may stay with us as long as they are comfortable using their falsetto, or lighter, voices on many of our pieces. However, since we have more boys continuing, we now have a substantial baritone section and we have programmed more and more repertoire for them over the past few years. Inside you may read about Reggie Vilecco, a high school senior who mentions this subject in his profile.

Please join us, our sopranos, altos and baritones, for our many exciting programs this year!

Jon Noyes

From the President...

As the new President of the FCCC Board, I want to take this opportunity to "welcome back" all of our friends for a new year. FCCC Founder and Music Director Jon Noyes has another spectacular program planned for this year, as you will see detailed on these pages and in future communications from FCCC. As a former Choir parent, I know first hand the very positive - even transforming - impact FCCC has on its members, its parents and volunteers, and the communities it serves.

As we start the new year, I would like to thank, on behalf of my fellow Board members, Carol Kolonay Spangler, past President of the FCCC Board, for her skilled and dedicated leadership over the past several years. Fortunately, Carol will be staying on with us as a member of the Board. Indeed, I am honored to be serving with a very committed and talented group of volunteer Board Member colleagues, and would like to acknowledge several of them here for their recent outstanding efforts: Treasurer and Development Committee Chair Beau Vilecco, whose many contributions to the Choir include securing, earlier this year, a major three-year grant commitment from the Connecticut Commission for the Arts; Board Secretary Marie Sacco, whose efforts led to financial support received from the Norwalk Kiwanis; and Member Joan McKenzie, who recently secured a grant from the Royal Bank of Scotland.

The Board members do a great job, but we need your help as well. If you can volunteer time and skills, contribute financially (*it's tax deductible!*), or if you have business and community contacts that you think can help support the work of FCCC, I welcome you to get in touch with me at jperi1958@aol.com. And don't forget to get out to FCCC's various concerts and events - it's great family entertainment! Thanks again for your support.

Joseph Peri

Michael J. Varga receives FCCC High Notes Award

The Fairfield County Children's Choir honored Mike Varga at the annual "High Notes Award." Mike has been a music educator for over thirty years and has been very active in promoting music and the arts. He also happens to be the teacher in whose classroom the FCCC rehearses each week and he has been one of the many people behind the scenes who have done so much to assist our work with our choristers. Below are remarks by Mike Varga following the presentation:

I would like to thank you for the honor of receiving the High Notes Award from the FCCC. It is an honor to have received it. And it is an honor to be sharing the stage with these wonderful and talented students, the directors, Mrs. Spangler, and certainly Mr. Nick Page. But I must tell you, that it has been my pleasure to shuffle chairs around the music room almost every week for the past 12 years, transforming it from a band room into a choral room. It has been a unique pleasure for me to be working in my office all these years on Wednesday evenings while listening to the outstanding rehearsals under the batons of so many fine conductors. Witnessing the slow but steady progress has been a treat for me, and I consider it a labor of love to have helped.

If the audience will excuse my back, I would like to speak to the students directly for a moment.

You should all be very proud of your accomplishments this year. Your choir is an outstanding example of the results of hard work, good teaching, and so much support from your families and your community.

There is a very important word you should all know: transition. It means a movement or change that takes place. Everyone goes through many changes or transitions in their lives. If you are in elementary school, an important transition will happen when you move into the middle school. You will to move around a large building, learn to change classes and have several teachers, and you'll do just fine. If you are in 8th grade, a bigger transition is in store for you when you graduate to the high school and start to attend classes with older kids who are really turning into young adults. That's a greater transition that prepares you for being a full member of the adult community. If you are a senior in 12th grade, you have been preparing for a transition that is your greatest yet, as you leave the security of your families and venture on to college. You will become your own individual, make your own decisions, choose your own career and eventually become a member of a town or city somewhere in Connecticut or another state. But no matter what your age, or what changes lay just around the corner for you, you all share one thing in common: The gift of your music. You have been given a voice that you use to fill you and your audiences with joy, emotion and pride. Your music reaches far and wide as many of you have performed at Carnegie Hall, West Point, or here at the Klein. You should be very proud of everything you have accomplished and all the happiness your music has brought to so many audiences.

Now if you will excuse me while I make a small transition of my own. I have a few words for your audience.

Eventually these students will become alumni, and perhaps someday will become parents who will sit in these very seats. All of you have made your own way through life and now are in a

position of great responsibility as you support these young people on stage. Whether you are enjoying this concert as a friend, neighbor, sister, brother, parent, or grandparent, I know that you take great pride in the music that these students are sharing with you today. Music is a mysterious and powerful part of our lives. It can calm you or make your heart race; it can bring tears to your eyes or laughter to your heart. It can make you forget your troubles, and it can bring complete strangers together for a lifetime. We may not understand why it has these powers, but we are thankful that it does.

These young people have been given a gift, and your support has enabled them to share that gift with so many others. Thank you for that support. Perhaps without realizing it, you have the responsibility of making one more transition: from simple concertgoer to a Steward of the Arts. Always keep in mind that the Arts are a vibrant and crucial part of a child's development. We must always be diligent in seeing to it that support for the Arts continues – that the opportunity given to these students is developed, nurtured, and safeguarded for the next generation of students.

And now we make yet another transition to the second half of our concert, to once again enjoy the Gift of Music.

Winter Concert "Holiday Brass"

December 14, 2008 3:00 P.M. • Klein Memorial, Bridgeport, CT
Guests: Fairfield County Brass Quintet

Our Winter Concert, "Holiday Brass," will include works by Bach, Mozart, Britten, Chilcott and others. Our special guests, the Fairfield County Brass Quintet, will join us for many classic pieces as well as numerous holiday selections to include *Do You Hear What I Hear*, *Let It Snow*, *While By My Sheep*, *Deck the Hall*, *S'vivon* and many more.

Broadway Concert

February 7, 2009 7:00 P.M. • Klein Memorial, Bridgeport, CT
Guest Artist: Michelle Mallardi

Our annual Broadway Concert will feature highlights from *Beauty and the Beast*, *Peter Pan*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Porgy and Bess*. Our guest artist will be Michelle Mallardi, who performed the role of Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway. In addition, she has joined the casts of *Les Miserables*, *A Chorus Line*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *West Side Story*, among others. And of course, this program features many of the best student soloists in the state, and our fantastic orchestra!

chorister profiles

Ashley Zdravec and Reggie Villecco are two members of our outstanding senior class for this season. Ashley, who was recently elected President of the Chamber Singers by her peers, has been a member of the FCCC for five years and Reggie for eight, since he was in the fifth grade! Their feelings for and dedication to the choir come shining through in their profiles below. Enjoy!

Name: Reggie Villecco

Age: 17

School: Fairfield Ludlowe HS

Town: Fairfield

Favorite FCCC Song: "Anything I can sing baritone on, or S'vivon and The Mark Twain Set by Nick Page"

In Your Own Words: FCCC has been one of the best experiences of my life so far. I'm always happy whenever I'm having a particularly bad week to be able to think, "Oh well, at least I get to sing on Wednesday." FCCC is a place where I've been able to make great friends that have a common interest in music and we also have an equal interest in making that music sound as good as it can. Not to mention that we also get to sing some pretty catchy tunes. I still remember getting the Irish songs from a few years back stuck in my head, and having the same thing happen with Siyahamba. Being in this group has taught me that when being part of a choir, it is important to always come in ready to work hard and not goof off. I believe that this lesson has better prepared me to continue singing when I leave high school and head off to college next fall. In conclusion, I will now always remember that the four basics of singing are: Posture, Breath, Tone and Diction.



Name: Ashley Zdravec

Age: 16

Town: Fairfield

Favorite FCCC Song:

"Hoj Hura Hoj and Total Praise"

In Your Own Words: I can't believe that four years have passed since I first joined the Fairfield County Children's Choir. I have had the most incredible experiences, lasting memories, and have built strong friendships that I know will last forever. I always look forward to spending my Monday and Wednesday nights at rehearsal with the people who are as passionate about music as I am. The rehearsals have become routine and I cannot imagine spending those evenings any other way.

I will never forget my first plane ride when the Chamber Singers traveled to England and Ireland during the summer of 2007. While singing in such a beautiful country, we learned a lot about history, religion, architecture, and we were fortunate enough to have an unforgettable tour guide, Helen! Singing at the Canterbury Cathedral was perhaps one of my favorite performances. I have carried so many memories with me since the trip, and look forward to one day venturing back.

Although I will be sad to leave the Fairfield County Children's Choir, I am grateful for the many memories and education that I have gained. I have only just begun to explore my passion for music and I look forward to experiencing even more musical opportunities in the future. I would like to thank Mr. Noyes, Mr. Simmons, and the rest of the FCCC conductors and staff for helping me along the way.





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FCCC 2008-2009 Calendar

(CS-Chamber Singers; CC-Concert Choir; CH-Chorale; Ch-Chorus)

2008

- Sep 19 Benefit for Malta House – Stamford (CS)
- Nov 6 Broadway solo auditions
- Nov 23 Catholic Charities Benefit – Edgerton Center (CC)
- Dec 11 Tree of Light – Visiting Nurses Benefit (CS)
- Dec 14 FCCC Winter Concert 3:00P.M. Klein, Bridgeport
- Dec 16 Trumbull Mall 7:00P.M. (Ch/CH)
- Dec 17 Norwalk Kiwanis (CS ensemble)

2009

- Feb 7 FCCC Broadway Concert & Auction 7:00P.M. Klein, Bridgeport
- Mar 8 Ridgefield Youth Symphony – WCSU (CS)
- Apr TBD Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Benefit (Ch/CH)
- Apr 26 JCCS Holocaust Commemoration Service (CS)
- May 9 FCCC Spring Concert - 7:00P.M. Norwalk Concert Hall
- Jun TBD New Orleans Send-Off Concert
- Jun 25-30 New Orleans Tour (CS)

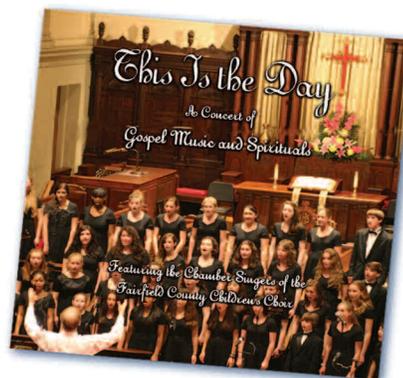


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