



Fairfield County Children's Choir

quarternotes

The Newsletter of the Fairfield County Children's Choir • Vol. 8, No. 1 • September 2007

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From the Music Director

Greetings and welcome to the Thirteenth Season of the Fairfield County Children's Choir! We are looking forward to an exciting year of music-making, including guest artists, concerts in wonderful venues and a number of special projects. We are thrilled to again bring Nick Page to the stage in May, 2008 as our Guest Artist and commissioned composer. In addition, we have been invited by Nick to join a festival he is conducting at Carnegie Hall in November! Our highly rewarding collaboration with the USMA Band at West Point continues, this time with the Army joining the FCCC at the Klein in March! In addition, I am pleased to announce that Maureen Hamill will be our Guest Soloist at our Broadway Concert in February. These are just some of the outstanding activities we will undertake this year!

I am again pleased to announce that the FCCC is the recipient of a grant from the CT Commission on Culture & Tourism in the amount of \$7,238. 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. Many thanks to Beau Villecco for making this happen!

In this issue of **quarternotes**, I would like to continue with my third installment of "What do we do in the FCCC?" In recent issues I explained our instruction of music reading and vocal technique. I will now briefly share with you our approach to *choral technique*.

The joyous act of choral singing is multifaceted and endlessly challenging. First, our tone quality must have support, beauty, vitality, deliberately formed vowels, resonance and it must change as we perform various styles of music. Henry Leck, an internationally renowned conductor who recently worked with the choir, noted that while some choirs sing most of their music with the same general tone production, the FCCC changes tone colors in ways that only the very best choirs do.

The next major area is *intonation*, or singing in tune. We use the analogy of "singing the note on the bull's eye" to develop this skill. Expression or interpretation, i.e. successful dramatic communication of the text, is crucial to excellent choral performance. This includes attention to style, phrasing, dynamics, word/syllable inflection and stage presence. Other important areas are blend within, and balance between, the sections of the choir; rhythmic and melodic accuracy; and appropriate diction. Our challenge is to master all of these *continued on page 2*

Dundalk Reception: A reception for the choir at the Dundalk Museum in Ireland. FCCC Music Director Jon Noyes is at the left with Cross Border Orchestra Ireland Director Sharon Treacy-Dunne at the right.



FCCC Chamber Singers Tour England & Ireland

The Chamber Singers experienced our longest and most rewarding tour this past summer when, from July 23 - August 4, we traveled to the countries of England and Ireland. The group's six formal performances were very well received by audiences in both countries, as were numerous impromptu events. While in England, the FCCC participated in the International Children's Choral Festival which included six choirs from throughout the United States, under guest conductors Henry Leck and David Flood. Concerts were held in Canterbury Cathedral, the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford and at St. Paul's Covent Garden in London. In addition, the group found time for touring, including stops at Windsor Castle, Buckingham Palace, Leeds Castle, the White Cliffs of Dover and the English Channel, the Tower of London, the original Hard Rock Café and Harrods Department Store. A panoramic driving tour and a cruise on the Thames capped nine wonderful days in England.



The FCCC visited the White Cliffs of Dover with the English Channel in the background. Although not visible in the photo, the weather was clear enough to see France across the Channel.

The choir's visit to Ireland featured a follow up collaboration with the Cross Border Orchestra Ireland (CBOI), the group with which we performed at Carnegie Hall in November, 2005. The CBOI welcomed the FCCC to their home in Dundalk for a day long visit which included three receptions, including greetings from the local Town Council, lunch and dinner, bowling, and an evening concert which was one of the highlights of the tour. We also enjoyed a brief excursion into Northern Ireland as we learned about the history of "The Troubles" but were able to see how much progress has been made toward peace. Plans are under way for our two groups to perform together again at Carnegie Hall in 2009. Touring in Dublin included visits to Trinity College and the Book of Kells, Grafton Street, a Riverdance-style show called Celtic Storm, and an afternoon visit to a pub in Temple Bar for some live Irish folk music.

It is difficult to put into words just how amazing the entire experience was for all those involved. Below are excerpts from two messages received after the tour from parents who did not travel with us, after their children had told them about the trip.

"I cannot thank you enough for providing such an amazing experience for [my daughter] and the entire choir. She was so excited and experienced so many positive things. I can't think of a better way for her to grow and see the world than through music. It was definitely one of those life changing experiences for her and I am thrilled. The time and energy you give is greatly appreciated. She will be a better person because of FCCC."



The choir performed at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, England.

"We can't thank you (and all the wonderful chaperones) enough for the memorable opportunity you gave [our daughter]. She has shared so many wonderful stories of the places she saw; of the performances, both planned and impromptu; and of new friendships. She will remember this always. FCCC is so much more than just a choir."

To find out more about the tour, please visit the FCCC web site at www.singfcc.org for a complete list of daily updates and more photos.

The FCCC visited Buckingham Palace in London. All photos by Jo Anne Saber.



From the Music Director *continued from page 1*
elements so that we may then enjoy bringing the music alive for our audiences and ourselves. As I said, this is endlessly challenging!

For those of you who are still with me, I have an invitation to all parents, alumni and friends. If singing in a choir is something you would love to do, you are invited to join the FCCC on stage at the Klein Auditorium on December 9. However, this is not an invitation simply to sing along, but to actually join us in rehearsals to prepare two selections, including singing in four part harmony. The pieces are "When You Believe" from *The Prince of Egypt* and "Winter Wonderland." In fact, in order to participate in this project, you must attend at least two of the following rehearsals, with the final rehearsal being the most important: Oct. 3, Nov. 7 or 28, Dec. 5. This will be fun and endlessly challenging!!

Jon Noyes

Scott Shuler Receives FCCC High Notes Award

The Fairfield County Children's Choir honored Scott Shuler at the Norwalk Concert Hall in May by presenting him with the annual "High Notes Award." In her remarks at the choir's Spring Concert, FCCC Board of Directors President, Carol Spangler, stated "*The FCCC High Notes Award is presented to Scott Shuler in recognition of his significant impact as an advocate of the arts and education in Connecticut and the United States.*"

Below are remarks by Scott Shuler following the presentation:

"Wow, my heart was already so full from the singing that it's hard to think of words - one of the reasons the arts exist is because so much of what we have to say and so much of what we need to know can't be expressed in words. The process that we witnessed tonight, played out in front of us, is one that I hope will be eternal: a process in which:

- composers find truth – sometimes expressed in words and sometimes much deeper than the words that they write in their songs – about what it means to be human;
- conductors examine this music and find the truth in it;
- conductors share the music with students, in ways that lights up their eyes and their hearts; and
- students share the music with an audience that delights in their joy and understanding.

There is nothing more beautiful than watching people sing. There is a special connection that vocal music makes, both as a singer and with an audience, that just can't be rivaled anywhere in the world. And when the audience – recognizing that they've been transported to a different place – says "Thank you" to the choir with applause, they are also raising a prayer of thanks to that spiritual source from which music emanates, which changes our lives each time that we hear it. In an age when we can carry music with us in an MP3 player, when it's coming out of our cell phones, some people forget that we need this kind of living music in our lives to make us human.

I wish I could take two or three of these performances with me, to hear after I got the phone call this week from Hartford saying that twelve or thirteen of their hard working music teachers, who have devoted their lives to helping kids in that urban district, were going to be asking for letters of recommendation and looking elsewhere for teaching positions. Or when I arrived in Norwalk to work with arts teachers last Wednesday, the day after the Central Office had announced that it was doing away with the Arts Supervisor and was laying off music staff.

At such times I think, now's the time for a *different* kind of voice, from all of us in this room. We've all experienced this change music makes in our lives. Students, your lives have been changed through this experience and if you become a principal, a superintendent, a legislator, maybe the President, make sure that this singing continues – not just for the few, but for *all* the kids in our schools. So, thank you so much for this plaque. It's my gift to be able to support the incredible teachers who give this gift to students, in spite of not always being appreciated and supported as they should, because they know it changes kids' lives. Thank you very much."

Chorister Profiles

Charlotte Boyd and Colleen Ellis are two of our outstanding seniors in the choir this year. They each joined FCCC in 2001 and have contributed a great deal to the choir over the years. Charlotte was elected last year as the President of the Chamber Singers. You may also find them in the photos from England & Ireland. Brava Colleen and Charlotte!



Name: Colleen Ellis

Age: 17

School: Fairfield Ludlowe High School

Town: Fairfield

Favorite FCCC Song:

"Children Go Where I Send Thee"

In Your Own Words:

FCCC has offered the most extraordinary opportunities that I wouldn't have experienced

otherwise. I would have never sung in such venues as West Point, Carnegie Hall and Canterbury Cathedral. I learned so much musically and culturally on the trip to England and Ireland and made great friends within the group. I know it is my last year and I can't imagine how I'll spend my Mondays and Wednesdays without choir rehearsal. FCCC rehearsals always help me escape from whatever else is going on in my life. I am always in a better mood after rehearsal.

Making music with such talented students is an amazing experience not only because the choir sounds great but because everyone genuinely wants to be part of FCCC. Music is a big part of my life and I hope to continue singing in college as well. So as I start my seventh year I know I will be more appreciative of every rehearsal and concert because I know that the year will go by very quickly!

Name: Charlotte Boyd

Age: 16

School: Fairfield Ludlowe High School

Town: Fairfield

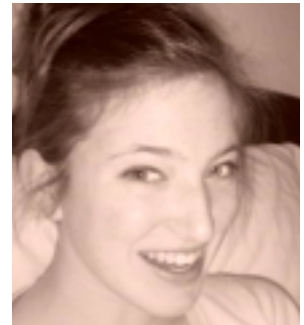
Favorite FCCC Song:

"St. Louis Blues", "Nigra Sum "

In Your Own Words: FCCC

has been a huge part of my life for the last seven years. I have

evolved so much as a musician due to the guidance of the choir as a whole and the amazing people that make it up. The constant determination to improve and incredible work ethic enforced by our leaders make us a strong group, both musically and socially. The choir breaks the age barrier that you are normally faced with at school and I have met some of my closest friends through this amazing community. It will be extremely difficult to leave at the end of this year but I am looking forward to making some great music this season, and I will carry the incredible memories I have had with this choir for the rest of my life.





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2007-2008 FCCC Schedule

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

2007

- Sept 5** FCCC First rehearsal
- Sept 15** Pitney Bowes Diversity Day – 10:00A.M. (CS)
- Oct 3** Annual Parent Meeting 7:00P.M. at FWMS
- OCT tbd** CS recording of Gospel CD
- Oct 22** Breast Cancer Awareness Program – Westport (CC)
- Oct 30** Broadway solo auditions
- Nov 4** Rutter – Mass of the Children (CS) w/area churches
- Nov 25** Carnegie Hall w/Nick Page (CS & CC)
- Dec 9** FCCC Winter Concert 3:00P.M. Klein, Bridgeport
- Dec 12** Trumbull Mall 7:00P.M. (Chorus/Chorale)

2008

- Feb 2** FCCC Broadway Concert & Auction 7:00P.M. Klein, Bridgeport
- Mar 15** USMA West Point Band w/FCCC choirs - Klein 7:00P.M.
- Mar 16** FCCC at West Point 3:00P.M.
- Apr tbd** Fairfield Holocaust Commemoration Service (CS)
- May 10** FCCC Spring Concert w/Nick Page 7:00P.M. Klein
- Jun 8** Torah Rededication Ceremony – Beth El (CS)
- Jun tbd** Tour (CS)



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