



Fairfield County Children's Choir

quarternotes

The Newsletter of the Fairfield County Children's Choir • Vol. 4, No. 3 • May 2004

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From the Music Director

As we approach the conclusion of our ninth season, we can look back on a spectacular year and ahead to an exciting one in which we will celebrate our Tenth Anniversary. In the near future we have a tour to Philadelphia on May 1 to attend the Heritage Music Festival. This promises to be an outstanding event as the adjudicators include Doreen Rao, David Brunner, Joan Gregoryk and Judith Willoughby. Following our performance we will have a tour of the national historic area, led by guides dressed in Colonial era costume, including the Liberty Bell, Constitution Hall and the new Museum of the Constitution.

On Saturday, May 8 we will present our annual Spring Concert at 7:00 P.M. at the Klein Auditorium in Bridgeport. The program will include folk songs from around the world, a couple of masterworks by Bach and Handel and the world premiere of Nick Page's commission *A Twain Set*. These three pieces, settings of texts by Connecticut's own Mark Twain, are full of wit, humor and even a surprise ending which will be enjoyed by all. Nick will also join us on stage to lead the choir and audience in a great sing-along, much as he did when he was our guest two years ago. Please join us for this fantastic experience!! Tickets will be available at the door.

One of the most important events of the past year was our concert at the American Choral Directors Association Convention in Boston in February. Our choristers performed superbly! It was the highest standard of excellence that we have ever reached. Please see the article by Whitney Webster inside which vividly describes our experience. CD's of our two performances in Boston are now available.

I have also included a letter from Amanda McDonald to Katie Kearney which illustrates a little of the magic behind the scenes at the FCCC. This was a simple, private gesture by a second year chorister to a sixth year chorister. Katie was very touched and mentioned it to me in the context of a discussion about our how our leaders set an example for the younger singers. I asked them both if they wouldn't mind sharing this story in [quarternotes](#). After speaking with Amanda's mother, Carole, I also asked her if she would share her thoughts as well. I hope you enjoy this insight into what many children experience in the FCCC.

Finally, I am sorry to announce that Marsha Whitman will be leaving her position as conductor of the Concert Choir. In addition to her full time job as a music teacher in New Canaan and a lovely family, Marsha and her husband own and operate the Silvermine Tavern in Norwalk. We all understand the demands of time as well as her decision to spend more of it with her family. On behalf of all of us at the FCCC, I thank her for her wonderful work with us and wish her all the best.

Jon Noyes

Chorister Profiles

Katie Kearney and Whitney Webster are two of our longest serving choristers, each having been with the FCCC for six years! Upon returning from our recent tour to Boston Whitney composed an essay for one of her classes at FLHS which is included in this issue. Take special note of her final paragraph! Katie, recently elected President of the Chamber Singers by her peers, is the subject of the letter written by Amanda McDonald which is also included. The success of the FCCC is due to amazingly talented and dedicated choristers such as these two young ladies!



Name: Whitney Webster

Age: 16

School: Fairfield Ludlowe High School

Town: Fairfield

Favorite FCCC Song: Andreissen Ave Maria and Clear Water

In Your Own Words: "Choir is

such a big part of my life, and being in a choir is great, especially when we have moments like we did in Boston. There's something so special about being with a group of people - working together, breathing together - and having something so wonderful to show for your effort."

Name: Katherine (*Katie*) Kearney

Age: 16

School: Lauralton Hall, Milford

Town: Redding

Favorite FCCC Song:

I'm Goin' Up A Yonder

In Your Own Words: I have been singing *I'm Goin' Up A Yonder* for six years, and it has become my favorite song. It is a beautiful, spiritual and emotional piece.

From the first time I sang it, I loved it. The message just touched me, and the feeling stuck with me. The song has taken on a deeper meaning in many ways throughout the years. Performing it at Carnegie hall after September 11th was an extraordinary experience for everyone involved. The choir also kindly sang *I'm Goin' Up A Yonder* at my grandmother's funeral, which meant a great deal to me. Finally this incredible piece was part of the most momentous performance I have ever given. I was able to sing this song of great significance, with the person in my life who means the most to me, my mom. This was an amazing gift that I will never forget and is by far my favorite performance. *I'm Goin' Up A Yonder* is such a gorgeous musical work that has inspired me in many ways, and thus is my favorite choir song to sing. I only hope that others are as moved by its beauty as I am.



Boston Memoir

by Whitney Webster

I am excited and a little anxious as I thump down the seemingly endless succession of stairs to what will be the performance of a lifetime. My choir is about to give a concert, but not just any concert. This is the concert to end all concerts, the equivalent of the playoffs for the choral music world. We have been accepted to sing at the American Choral Directors Association Convention. As the lengthy title suggests, this is a very prestigious event.

We will be singing for an audience made up entirely of choir directors. They will be the most critical audience we will ever sing for. They will know when a note is out of tune or a rhythm is rushed or a vowel is misshapen. That's a scary thought.

We file into Old South Church and line up on the steps in the front of the pews now crowded with people listening attentively to the man who is introducing us. I am so intent on what is about to happen that I barely hear him. "... with the director Jon Noyes, who was an instrumental director before he came over from the Dark Side..." I laugh more out of excitement than anything else.

Finally we are ready to start. The conductor whispers some last minute reminders "relax and remember to start quiet and then move forward with the note..." and we begin.

Right from the beginning we are solid. Our sound is beautiful, the notes are in tune, there is a difference between our louds and softs, and most importantly, we have stage presence. I find myself moving to the music. My face is expressive, something I have always found difficult. Today I am right on target.

We move from the slower classical songs into the more upbeat gospel and jazz. By the end of our final piece, "St. Louis Blues," we are rocking.

continued next page

Boston Memoir, continued

There is a pause as the final note hangs in the air and then the audience is on their feet. I am shocked. Standing ovations are not a regular thing at these conventions, and usually standing ovations are much slower than this. They're standing right away this time. I believe we knocked their socks off.

I cannot begin to describe the feeling I received as I scanned the faces of the smiling audience. It is a feeling that only someone who has won the Super Bowl or climbed Mt. Everest could ever understand. My hard work has finally paid off. As I run out of breath climbing up the endless flights of stairs, I rediscovered something.

"Oh right. This is why I sing. This feeling - it's what I live for."

Announcing:

Opening for Conductor of the FCCC Concert Choir.
Rehearsals on Wednesday evenings from September through May, 4-6 Concerts per year.

Send cover letter and resume by June 1 to:
P.O. Box 110588, Trumbull, CT 06611



To Jon Noyes and members of FCCC:

The following letter was written by my daughter Amanda to fellow chorister, Katie Kearney. My daughter's intent was certainly not to have attention brought upon herself; rather, the letter was written to Katie because she inspired and reached a part of my daughter that Amanda had not experienced before in her young life. As a result, Amanda felt compelled to share that experience with Katie. With Amanda's permission, she has agreed to let us reproduce the letter since it illustrates the importance of how music touches the human spirit.

Amanda started with FCCC as a nine year old with all good attentions: she loved to sing, she looked forward to being with current friends and making new ones along the way, and she especially anticipated the thrill of singing on stage with the choir. For the most part, older and younger choristers do not sing together unless it is in preparation for a concert. The first time Amanda heard Katie's beautiful voice, she made it a point to find out who she was. A year passed before Amanda composed a note and had it sent to Katie through a mutual friend, Rachel Phillips. In the note, Amanda praised Katie and her gifted voice. Amanda's admiration for Katie went beyond her beautiful voice: Amanda's soul had been touched by the gift bestowed upon Katie.

Amanda has begun to experience music differently ever since. She has discovered joy in singing and listening

to beautiful music on a much deeper level. She has gained a greater appreciation for the hard work and dedication that both the singers and the conductors bring to the practices and the performances. Most importantly, Amanda has achieved respect and admiration for her fellow choristers, especially Katie Kearney, who, unknowingly serves as a role model for my daughter. Amanda is honored to be part of the Fairfield County Children's Choir family and I am so grateful for all that this choir brings into my child's life.

Sincerely,
Carole McDonald
Mother of Amanda McDonald, Chorale

Dear Katie,

Hi. My name is Amanda MacDonald and I am part of Chorale. I wanted you to know that you are one of my favorite singers. When you sang "Hello Dolly" in last year's Broadway concert, I thought you were amazing! I cannot wait to hear you sing in the next concert! I want you to know that you have inspired me to become a better singer. You are a very talented person and I hope you will always keep on singing.

*Sincerely,
Amanda MacDonald*

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2004 FCCC SCHEDULE

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

May 1	Tour to Philadelphia (CC, CH, Ch)
May 8	FCCC Spring Concert 7:00 P.M. Klein Auditorium
June 6	FCCC at Bridgeport Bluefish 1:30 P.M. Harbor Yard
June 12	Smile Train Benefit Concert (CS) 7:00 P.M. FHS
Sept. 8	First Rehearsal – 10th Season
Oct. 30	CT ACDA – Fairfield University (CS)
Dec. 5	FCCC Winter Concert, 3:00 P.M. Klein
Dec. 12	West Point Holiday Concert (CS)
2005	
May 7	FCCC Spring Concert
July 12-20	Tour to Pacific Rim Festival, Hawaii (CS)



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www.singfccc.org
