Spring 2013

Volume 4

The mission of Rogue Valley Chorale is to inspire and enrich our communities through the

performance of great choral music performed by choruses of all ages.

Rogue Valley Chorale Association Newsletter



40 Years of Memories

Memories! Ah, memories! With a forty year history of making music the Rogue Valley Chorale has built a treasury of memories.

Our February 23 and 24 concerts are entitled Hallelujah. They are programs of sacred music through time, a tribute to how religion has shaped our culture and musical repertoire. We will feature a small portion of the

works we have sung over the years. Some selections have been pieces requested by our loyal patrons. Chorale members who were especially moved while singing them in the past suggested others. Some of the numbers to be presented were chosen because of the memorable places in which they were performed.

The Chorale has sung many Masses over the years from Palestrina to excerpts from Bernstein's Mass written for the dedication of the Washington D.C. Kennedy Center. The Mass is a choral composition that sets the portions of the Eucharist Liturgy to music. We've compiled one comprised of the works of various composers including Vaughan Williams (Kyrie), Mozart (Gloria and Laudate Dominum), Poulenc (Sanctus), Schubert (Benedictus), Haydn (Agnus Dei) and Bach (Dona Nobis Pacem). The music will present the profound way that great composers have approached a choral form that has been celebrated for hundreds of years.

We also want you to hear pieces the Chorale has sung in great cathedrals during our European tours or in New York's Carnegie Hall. We were thrilled to be invited to sing in such places as San Marco Basilica in Venice. Chiesa de Santa Margherita in Florence, the Baptistry in Pisa, and England's great Coventry, York and Canterbury cathedrals.

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Rogue Valley Chorale Celebrates Its 40th Anniversary Season



This season marks 40th the anniversary of the Rogue Valley Chorale. Since its founding in 1973, the chorale has

Celebrating the

joy of singing

cultural atmosphere of Southern Oregon by providing audiences with exceptional classical and contemporary choral works. We intend for our 40th anniversary performances to be memorable. Many of the musical selections performed during our remaining concerts of the season will be old favorites, special works, as well as commissioned pieces.

February 23 at Bethel Church and February 24, 2013 at the Craterian ... Hallelujah ... a program of sacred music through time, a tribute to how religion has shaped our culture and musical repertoire.

April 27 and 28, 2013 at the Craterian... Forte at Forty ... a 40-year celebration of the Chorale's favorite works including To Music, an original composition commissioned by the Chorale from Dr. David Childs, premiered in 2011.

To purchase tickets call the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater Box Office at 541-779-3000 or order on-line at www.craterian.org. Tickets to the February 23 concert at Bethel Church are available on-line at www.roguevalleychorale.org or at the door.

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Executive Director's Report



The last few months, as I have donned my Executive Director's hat, my time has been spent with Fund development workshops, strategic planning, committee development and the Artistic Director search. There has been more to do than time has allowed.

Following our holiday performance, our music committee put in long hours

shelving the Christmas repertoire and preparing folders filled with music for our next concert. The Rogue Valley Chorale returned after a holiday break and I was able to switch to my singer's hat. Our first rehearsal is always spent renewing our friendships and running through the new program. It always feels wonderful to sing after a break.

As we sang Franz Biebl's *Ave Maria* I was taken back to a time when I traveled with the Chorale on tour. We sang the same *Ave Maria* in the Wierkirche in Germany on a Sunday afternoon as flies buzzed around us (the church was located in a remote meadow). As I watched Lynn direct I noticed a man sitting in a side pew listening to our choir of 60 from far-off Medford, Oregon. As he listened, tears streamed down his face. I don't know what chain of events brought him there that afternoon, as he had no connection to our group. I don't know what country he was from or what language he spoke, but at that moment we had a connection. It was all about the music.

As I prepare for our wonderful February concert, I am grateful for the reminder that it is all about the music. Yes, there are deadlines that must be met and meetings that must be attended. But in the end, within the music the heart finds peace.

~ Jacque Schmidt, Executive Director

* * *

Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.

~Berthold Auerbach

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent.

~Victor Hugo

A Message From Our Board President



It's been a busy year for the Rogue Valley Chorale. We started our 2012-2013 season with a marvelous holiday concert that featured Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* and Heinrich

Schütz's *Magnificat*. We also sang a number of carols in which audience members were invited to sing along. The concert was a wonderful way to celebrate the season.

We are currently rehearsing for our February 23 and 24 concert which features a program of sacred music through time. The concert is a tribute to how religion has shaped our culture and musical repertoire. We'll be singing some exquisitely beautiful classics, as well as spirituals and some songs written by modern day composers. The program promises to be exceptional!

Members of the Board and Youth Choruses' Steering Committee are teaming with Joy Marshall of Marshall Fundraising Management to plan *The Joy of Singing Anniversary Celebration* to be held on March 16th. We look forward to sharing the history of our organization with our guests and spotlighting two of our youth choruses, as well as the Chorale.

We are treasuring these last months with Conductor Lynn Sjolund, who will be retiring at the end of our 2012-2013 season. He has been much loved and will be sorely missed. We are confident that our incoming Artistic Director will bring his or her own special gifts to the organization, however, and anticipate many more years of bringing beautiful choral music to our Rogue Valley audiences. We continue to search for our next Artistic Director and anticipate a selection in the next few months.

We are grateful for the opportunity to share music with each and every one of you. Thank you for your support of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association.

~ Beth Gibson, Board President

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Youth Choruses Alumna Adrianne Box



Adrianne Box began singing with the Children's Chorus in 5th grade. Her love of singing kept her with Rogue Valley Youth Choruses until she graduated from High School.

Adrianne is currently attending the University of

Oregon in Eugene and is the recipient of several scholarships. She is majoring in Communication Disorders and Sciences and intends to use her degree as a speech therapist. Music therapy will be an important component of her approach to helping those with communication difficulties.

During Adrianne's first year at the University of Oregon she did not participate in any of the choruses on campus, so she had no outlet for her singing passion. "I felt sad without anywhere to sing," she said. She is now an alto with the University of Oregon Repertory Singers.

Adrianne has many favorite memories of her time with RVYC. She loved going on tour. She remembers many trips including Seattle (where she sang in St. James Cathedral), Portland, and San Francisco (where the group sang in the Alcatraz Prison showers). She quoted Conductor Pam Nordquist who advised the young singers to "ask forgiveness, not permission," so they sang in many wonderful places until they got "kicked out."

Adrianne sang under Conductor Pam Nordquist during her final years with RVYC. She remembers Ms Nordquist as someone with whom it is easy to talk. She made many friends in RVYC with whom she keeps in touch. Adrianne is looking forward to the Youth Ensemble's 10th Anniversary celebration during the summer of 2013 when many alumni will meet again to sing together and share memories.

Upcoming Youth Choruses Performances

- ~ May 3, Spring Sing, 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., Medford Central High School,
- ~ May 11, Spring Concert, 7 p.m. North Medford High School

The Rogue Valley Chorale Association's Youth Choruses provide opportunities for talented young singers to participate in choral organizations of the highest quality. For more information contact Margie Grether at margiegrether@gmail.com.

Fundraising 101 With Joy and Larry Marshall



The Rogue Valley Chorale received grants from Mever Memorial Trust and the Oregon Arts Commission to be used for fund development training and project initiation. We selected Marshall

Fundraising and Events Management as our consulting firm to facilitate an intensive fundraising training program for the Rogue Valley Chorale Board of Directors during the summer of 2012. With their help we updated our strategic plan, developed new mission and vision statements, and learned how to convey our impact on our community to potential donors. Skills learned will enable the organization to effectively support its mission by increasing corporate and community support.

Marshall Fundraising and Events Management is one of the West's leading fundraising and special events consulting firms. Co-founder Joy Marshall is a highly experienced fundraising professional who, for over 15 years, served as the primary consultant to many of Children's Miracle Network's 175 hospital foundations in the USA, Canada and Mexico. Larry Marshall, Co-founder of Marshall Fundraising Management focuses on organizational strategy and awareness-building to support fundraising and development programs. He is an innovative thinker who contributes *out-of-the-box* ideas that add new dimensions to traditional programs.

On March 16 the Marshalls will assist the Chorale in holding a fundraising dinner entitled *The Joy of Singing Anniversary Celebration*. The free, mission-driven event will share with current and potential donors the nature of our organization and how it contributes to the cultural atmosphere of our Rogue Valley community. Our youth and adult choruses will perform, and Conductor Lynn Sjolund will serve as our featured speaker. The evening holds many other surprises such as an anniversary walk through an array of costumes and Chorale memorabilia.

If you are interested in attending The Joy of Singing Anniversary Celebration please contact us at web@roguevalleychorale.org or call 541-582-0574.

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Synesthesia: Seeing Sound and Hearing Color

As long as I can remember, listening to music evoked a fabulous visual display of colors. Middle C presented itself to me as waves of yellow. G reminded me of the color of new leaves or spring grass. B flat appeared as royal purple, always transparent and always filmy and wavering. What I didn't know was that not everyone saw colors when

they heard music. I learned in college that I was part of a small group of individuals called synesthetes in which auditory stimulation leads to automatic, involuntary experiences in visual sensory pathways. The way it was described to me is that nerve impulse centers in the brain remain open in synesthetes, allowing sensory signals to cross. I have perfect pitch, but in my case I sometimes cannot identify a pitch unless I can see its color.

My form of synesthesia works both ways. I see colors when I hear music, but I also hear music in color. When a sunset is particularly colorful, especially with hues of orange, I hear E chords, and sometimes I am visited by snippets of Franz Schubert's Symphony in E Major. One of my most beautiful and memorable synesthetic moments occurred during the Rogue Valley Chorale's 2011 European singing tour. We visited Coventry Cathedral, which had an exquisitely beautiful stained glass window. I stared at the brilliant yellow center of the window and was brought to tears by the symphony of sound I heard, all of which centered around middle C. Beethoven's 1st Symphony came through loud and clear for a while, then faded into the background while other music wafted in and out.

I am not the sole synesthete in my family. My father sees colors in mathematical concepts, and my sister sees colors in words. Synesthesia has a strong genetic component. Over 40% of synesthetes have a first-degree relative (a parent or sibling) with synesthesia, and families often contain multiple synesthetes.

I am grateful to be able to see color in music and consider it a tremendous gift. Does it come with a few, not so pleasant tag alongs? Yes. When a song is out of tune I see a jarring flash of clashing colors and have a sense of someone dragging their nails across a chalkboard. (When I twitch or cover my ears at rehearsal my fellow Chorale members will now know why, not that we are ever out of tune, mind you!) I struggle when a piece of music is transposed because the pitches don't match the notes written on the music. Singing along with out of tune pianos always presents a challenge. And radio stations that play recordings a little slowly so that they are pitched at a quarter tone drive me nuts. But all things considered, my synesthetic auditory/visual displays are a sensory experience I treasure. ~Laura Rich

Perfect Pitch and Early Musical Exposure



Kathleen Davis remembers a moment in kindergarten when the teacher was urging the other 5 year-olds to match pitch in order to sing together. Eagerly, Kathleen raised her hand and piped up "If you just play the note, I can sing it!" This response was received with glares from other children and the

teacher. Since then, she has realized that having good pitch can be a blessing and a curse. Born into a musical family, Kathleen began studying piano when she was seven years old. She subsequently developed an exceptional ear and confesses that she can't imagine a life without music.

As a teenager, Kathleen's father identified her perfect (or nearly perfect, she insists) pitch when she suggested to him from the kitchen that he had played the wrong note on the living room piano. Her father then played a series of notes which she (still in the kitchen) identified and he (fond parent) was delighted to declare that she might have perfect pitch.

Kathleen falls into a small but statistically significant group of individuals with excellent pitch who were exposed to music at a young age. In fact, 95% of people with perfect pitch began music lessons before the age of 8. Some researchers believe we are all born with perfect pitch, but lack of early use shuts down the neuro-pathways to pitch identification.

"Good pitch is a wonderful inherited gift that has enhanced my enjoyment of music by opening up musical opportunities, especially in choral music," says Kathleen. Nevertheless, she doesn't pay much attention to it because other aspects of music-making (phrasing, dynamics, tempo), are at the heart of beautiful performances.

Indeed, there are times when perfect pitch is something of a curse. If her fellow singers have dropped in pitch, she must try to transpose the score into a new key. "It's difficult. I have to force my brain to re-code the music to a new key. I can't just sing the note that's on the page."

Like most people with perfect pitch the notes are not always accessible. She can sometimes pull a pitch out of the ethers, but at other times the pitch abandons her.

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Andrea Brock Accompanist/Piano Soloist



The Rogue Valley Chorale is extremely fortunate to have Andrea Brock as the accompanist and piano soloist. She has performed with the group and accompanied the weekly rehearsals for the past 13 years. Conductor Lynn Sjolund says that Andrea is the best accompanist with whom he has ever worked. and her innate musicianship and fine technical proficiency make her

indispensable to the Chorale. Her exceptional musicality is certainly an asset appreciated by all.

In addition to her work with the Chorale, Andrea is Director of Choral Activities and Teacher On Assignment for the Arts Department at South Medford High School. As an educator Andrea has developed a tradition of creating fine performing groups that have consistently been competitors in the Oregon State Choral Contest. She is currently serving as the president of Southern Oregon Music Educators Association, District 8.

Andrea Brock studied with Helen Walker-Hill while attending the University of Colorado. She furthered her studies with Dean Kramer at the University of Oregon where she received a bachelor's degree in music education. Andrea went on to pursue her master's degree in music education at the University of Oregon. As a student she accompanied the University Singers. She was honored with the prestigious Max Reisinger Award for music education in 1996. Her post graduate work included a course in collaborative piano with Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer in Lyon, France.

Ms Brock shares her gifts with the community as a pianist in local productions. She accompanied the All-State and All-Northwest choirs on four separate occasions. She was the accompanist for the Oregon Bach Festival's Youth Choral Academy in Eugene, Oregon, directed by Anton Armstrong. In addition to her piano skills, Ms Brock is a singer and has performed solos with the Rogue Valley Chorale. She co-directs the First Christian Church Choir with her Husband, Andrew Brock.

Andrea Brock currently resides in Medford, Oregon with her husband, Andrew (Tenor Soloist with the Rogue Valley Chorale), and their three young children, Keenan, Molly and William.

Chris Thompson Reflects on His Mentor



Chris Thompson has been hailed as "a lyric baritone possessing that rare combination of velvet tone, comic timing, and elegant stage deportment." He has performed solos for the Rogue Valley Chorale on numerous occasions, the most recent being the 2007 production of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.

Chris met Lynn Sjolund in 1988 following his graduation from the University of Kansas. He came to Loyola University in New Orleans for Graduate School while Mr. Sjolund was Director of Choral Studies. When Chris arrived at the university he learned that his Teacher's Aide position had been canceled. Chris was without resources and resolved that he would have to drop out of school. "Lynn came to bat for me. I became his TA and he even let me share his office. Now what professor does that for a moody 22 year old?" said Chris. For the following two years Chris became an unofficial foster son to Lynn and Doris Sjolund, often eating dinner with them, house sitting when they left town and leaning on them when life presented challenges. Chris feared that his special relationship with the Sjolunds would end when they returned to Oregon in 1990. While attending the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London Chris received a phone call from Mr. Sjolund asking him to perform the role of Figaro in Rossini's Barber of Seville. He eagerly accepted.

Renewing his friendship with the Sjolunds was Important to Chris for a variety of reasons. "When Lynn and Doris left New Orleans I felt lost. They understood my passion for music. Their positive and embracing natures lifted me out of many dark places," he said. Chris describes Lynn Sjolund as someone who holds music in exceptional esteem, yet makes it accessible to everyone. "He chooses the most challenging musical literature, but has absolute faith in the ability of his artists to accomplish it. The breadth of material he has done is staggering and humbling." He comments that Lynn taught him how to teach, conduct and convey his passion for music to others through singing, but most importantly he learned from his mentor how to be a good and kind human being. For almost three decades Chris has remained a student, friend, colleague, and still considers himself to be an unofficial foster son of the Sjolunds.

Chris Thompson presently serves as Coordinator of Vocal Studies at Missouri State University. 5

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Singing Couple Janet and Don Dolan



Photo by Drew Fleming

we often don't have time for much more than a brief hello. So it was with great pleasure that I took the time to learn about the lives of singing couple Janet and Don Dolan. Their professional

In the midst of

and

rehearsals

performance careers have spanned decades and have taken them to New York stages, Los Angeles TV and film screens and numerous countries throughout the world.

Janet came from a musical family who fully supported her studies at the Boston Conservatory of Music where she majored in dance. She landed her first professional job during her senior year and began working right after graduation on the Summer Stock productions of *Bye Bye Birdie* and *Gypsy*. She continued working on stages in New York and danced in a "night club" act on the *Ed Sullivan Show* with Jimmy Durante.

Don started his career as a forest ranger, but discovered his love of singing while working in the Southeast. He auditioned for a community theater production of *Damn Yankees*, followed by *West Side Story*. His performance as a soloist singing *Officer Krupke* in *West Side Story* literally stopped the show. Don was hooked. He made a life-changing decision to pursue his love of singing and acting, moved to New York and was accepted as a singer in the professional Leonard De Pour Chorus. He toured 15 countries with the all male ensemble.

The couple has performed with Janis Paige, Milton Berle, Jester Hairston, Fayard Nicholas and Bob Hamilton.

Don and Janet met while performing at the Thomas Wolf Playhouse in Asheville, NC. Don said, "I took one look at this picture of her and, oh my! I had to meet this woman!" After a summer of intense rehearsals and performances Don proposed and they married six months later.

While in New York Don's career began to accelerate. The couple made the decision to move to Los Angeles, where Don began acting in television and film productions, including a six-year run on *General Hospital* as Police Chief Guy Lewis, *The Jeffersons*, *Different Strokes*, *Quantum Leap*, *Hill Street Blues*, *Our House* and numerous short spots and commercials.

Singing Couple

Both Janet and Don sang with the Valley Master Chorale and traveled to China where they performed Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in 5 cities.

Twenty years after moving to Los Angeles show business became much more cut-throat and profit oriented. So Janet and Don decided to leave California and start a bed and breakfast in Ashland, Oregon. But the day before they closed on their inn Janet said, "You know, we don't work very well together." With wounded pride, followed by the realization that she was absolutely correct, Don agreed to abandon the plan to open a bed and breakfast and change direction. Janet became the Administrator for the Unitarian Church in Ashland, and Don began working with the Rogue Music Theater and the Rogue Opera. "I create the chaos," said Don, "and Janet puts it all in order."

Janet and Don Dolan joined the Rogue Valley Chorale and the Siskiyou Singers in 1994, shortly after moving to Ashland. Don said, "Both Dave Marston (past Conductor for the Siskiyou Singers) and Lynn Sjolund instill the joy of choral singing in our hearts. We are so fortunate to have had adventure and variety in our lives. We have been very lucky."

By Laura Rich, Soprano, Rogue Valley Chorale

Kathleen Davis/Perfect Pitch (continued from page 4)

Studies suggest that different parts of our brains are active depending upon our context. A person with perfect pitch has to adjust brain focus in order to "find" pitches.

Like Laura, Kathleen also has color/sound synesthesia. When Laura insists that F is a rust color and B-flat is blue-green Kathleen declares, "F just above middle C is blue and B-flat must be golden brown!"

When curious friends ask "How can you pull a pitch out of thin air?" She responds, "How can an artist paint what she sees? It's just a gift from my family's DNA."

Kathleen Davis, Alto, has sung with the Rogue Valley Chorale since its inception in 1973.



Taxpayer Relief Act IRA Charitable Rollover Lynn

New legislation makes it easy to give tax-free gifts to charities like the Rogue Valley Chorale.

The IRA Charitable Rollover has been extended through the end of 2013 as a provision of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012. The IRA Charitable Rollover allows individuals age $70\frac{1}{2}$ and older to make direct transfers totaling up to \$100,000 per year from an IRA to 501(c)(3) organizations, without having to count the transfers as income for federal income tax purposes.

Why make an IRA Charitable Rollover gift to the RVCA?

- You can simplify your federal income taxes. The gift is tax-neutral, which means it doesn't count as income from your IRA or as a charitable tax deduction.
- It counts toward your required minimum distribution and reduces your required minimum distribution for next year.
- Your gift can support the Chorale in a variety of ways by providing funds for soloists, instrumental accompaniment, programming costs, operational support and our Rogue Valley Youth Choruses.

To give a gift contact us at info@roguevalleychorale.org or visit our website at http://www.roguevalleychorale.org

Lynn Sjolund/40 Years

(continued from page 1)

We performed in the Salzburg Cathedral where Mozart worked which gave us a unique connection to his music. The Chorale also had the privilege of singing both a concert and for Mass in Medford's Sister City, Alba, Italy.

Our concert programs for the final two performances of the season will include the dates and places that the songs were previously presented so that we can share our history with our audience. Over the past forty years we have performed in quite a few venues from North Medford High School, the Christian Church, the Eastwood Baptist Church, the First Presbyterian Church, and the SOU Recital Hall. We were the first attraction to perform in the renovated Craterian Ginger Rogers theater and the first group to perform many of the masterpieces of choral music.

But even with the immense amount of choral literature we have performed over the past four decades, there is the knowledge that the repertoire of music is ever growing. And that knowledge keeps us going. We will continue to look for exciting new music and more of the great masterpieces of the past, so that we can share it with you, our Rogue Valley audiences.

Onward and upward!

By Lynn Sjolund, Artistic Director

Artistic Director Lynn Sjolund will be retiring in May of 2013 after forty years of exceptional service to our community.



For more than 35 years, the Rogue Valley Chorale has been at the heart of the arts scene and has enjoyed the support of our community, without whom we could not have reached our current level of excellence. Financial support is essential to the Chorale's ability to entertain and enrich the lives of Rogue Valley audiences.

Would you like to make a donation to the Rogue Valley Chorale? To make a charitable contribution simply visit our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org and click on Donate. On-line contributions are routed through *PayPal* and are safe and secure. You can also mail your donation to Rogue Valley Chorale, 724 S Central, Suite 102, Medford, OR 97501. We thank you for your support.

We are grateful to our many supporters who make it possible for us to celebrate the joy of singing with our community.



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Rogue Valley Chorale

Celebrating the joy of singing

Rogue Valley Chorale Board of Directors Beth Gibson, President

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Carmen Adams, Youth Choruses President

To contact the Rogue Valley Chorale visit our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org.

Roguevalley Chorale

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