



The mission of Rogue Valley Chorale is to inspire and enrich our communities through great choral music performed by choruses of all ages.

Rogue Valley Chorale Association Newsletter



Misa Azteca
Saturday, March 12, 7:30
Sunday, March 13, 3:00
Free pre-concert lectures:
6:30 Saturday and 2:00 Sunday

Misa Azteca is a modern choral work composed by Joseph Julian Gonzalez. The movements are based on the visceral rhythms of Aztec drumming. Also performing will be Cantare Chorus and Ballet Folklorico Ritmo Alegre. Join us for this powerful musical extravaganza.



Festival of Church Choirs
Saturday, May 14
all day workshops
Sunday, May 15
Concerts at 3:00 and 7:30

The Rogue Valley Chorale will sponsor a weekend of workshops culminating in celebratory performances with a mass choir as we come together with church choirs from around the Rogue Valley.



Rogue Valley Youth Choruses
Spring Concert
Saturday, May 14, 7:00
North Medford High School
Auditorium

Rogue Valley Youth Choruses welcome the return of spring in a festive celebration of choral music.

Composer Joseph Julian Gonzalez to Offer a Pre-Concert Lecture

We are pleased to invite our community to participate in pre-concert lectures/discussions prior to RVC's March 12 and March 13 Misa Azteca concerts. Joseph Julian Gonzalez, who composed the work, will offer the lectures.

Misa Azteca is an 8 movement, symphonic oratorio. The movements are performed with mixed choir, soloists, piano, Aztec percussion and guitar accompaniment. It is based on the Roman Catholic Mass and sung in Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl (Aztec).

Joseph Julian Gonzalez



MISA AZTECA

Misa Azteca has delighted audiences and garnered standing ovations in some of the most prestigious concert halls and music festivals in the world including the Sydney Opera House, the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Vatican, Carnegie Hall, *Festival Cervantino Internacional*, and the St Denis Music Festival. *Misa Azteca* has touched and inspired people throughout the world.

To learn more about Mr. Gonzalez see page 3 or visit misaazteca.com.

Reflections from the Artistic Director



Photo by Christopher Briscoe

By Laurie Anne Hunter

Rehearsals have begun for our upcoming presentation of *Misa Azteca* by Joseph Julian Gonzalez. Singers are already telling me how much they are enjoying the piece, and I think the final results will be spectacular! We are very excited that the composer is coming to Medford for our performances and will be giving pre-concert lectures about his work.

I'm also pleased to announce our two outstanding soloists, Katie Harman Ebner, soprano and Ricardo Garcia, tenor. Katie was crowned Miss America, 2002, having won the pageant just one week after the September 11 attacks of 2001. She currently lives in Klamath Falls where her husband works for the Oregon Air National Guard. Ricky Garcia lives in the San Francisco Bay area, where he was recently the 3rd place winner in the Brava! Opera Theater and James M. Collier Young Artist Program's vocal competition. They are both wonderful talents, and if you can't wait until March to hear them, you can look them both up on YouTube!

I've long been a proponent of collaboration, and I'm very pleased that we will open our March concert singing an energetic Spanish piece with the Cantare Chorus, who will then present a set of pieces on their own under the direction of their conductor, Shaun Garner. We are also showcasing the talents of Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre, a local dance troupe that specializes in the teaching and performing of regional folk dances from all over Mexico.

These performances will take place on Saturday, March 12 at 7:30 pm and Sunday, March 13 at 3:00 pm.

Following that we look forward to our exciting Festival of Church Choirs in May. The Chorale will present sacred and inspirational music from varying traditions in the first half of the concert. Then we are inviting singers from across our community to join us for a gala mass choir extravaganza under the direction of guest conductor Don Brinegar. If you are part of a church choir, or any other community choral group, please help us to spread the word! And if you aren't currently in a choir, but would still like to join us, this is your chance... No auditions necessary!

Here's how it works: Non-Chorale members will be able to purchase their own packet of music through the JW Pepper website, <http://www.jwpepper.com/> by clicking on

Reflections from the Board President



Photo By Michael D. Davis

By Kenne Horton

With my two-year term as President of the Board of Directors ending June 30, 2016, this is likely my final newsletter article. I have been reflecting on my term in office. It seems as if the time has flown by, yet much has happened. The state of the Rogue Valley Chorale Association is strong!

Laurie Anne Hunter is excelling as Artistic Director. She has the chorale singing very well and is designing especially entertaining concerts. Our Christmas with the Chorale concert with special guests Men of Worth received very high praise from our audiences. The singers are very excited as we prepare *Misa Azteca*. We anticipate composer Joseph Julian Gonzalez's visit to Medford. He will attend the presentations of his work and provide free pre-concert lectures for our audiences.

Our Rogue Valley Youth Choruses are going strong also. We experienced a record turnout of young singers to the auditions held for the upcoming Spring concert season! Our Cantare chorus of 7th through 9th grade singers will be part of our upcoming *Misa Azteca* concerts. You won't want to miss them.

We are also very excited to be sending all five of our directors, Laurie Anne Hunter, Pam Nordquist, Shaun Garner, Gerry Flock, and Wendy Cawthorne, to the upcoming Rod Eichenberger Choral Conductors Workshop this July in Cannon Beach, Oregon. It is a five-day professional development workshop that will further equip our extremely skilled team to lead and instruct the singers in their care.

Our organization has grown organically over the past forty-three years. It began as a chorus of adult singers and now consists of five choruses serving singers beginning in third grade. We have experienced some growing pains at times. Now the Board of Directors and the Steering Committee that oversees the Youth Choruses work together more than ever through shared participation in annual retreats and in Marketing and Development to fulfill our mission. Many people serve in leadership with both our adults and student singers.

Most of all, however, our Association is strong because of the support we receive from you, our community members, foundations and business sponsors. We are grateful that you believe in our mission to inspire and enrich our community and to teach young singers to celebrate the joy of singing for their entire lives.

Thank you for your continued generous support!

(Continued on page 6)

Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre Joins RVCA In Concert



Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre will join the Rogue Valley Chorale on the Craterian stage at the Collier Center for the Performing Arts on March 12 and March 13, 2016. The company will perform a selection of Aztec dances during the first act of the Misa Azteca concert.

Ritmo Alegre is a Mexican folk dance ensemble located in Medford, OR. The performers

use music, movement and colorful costumes to tell stories about regional Mexican culture. Ritmo Alegre started as a high school club at South Medford High School 20 years ago and is now a thriving nonprofit organization with a permanent dance studio located at Central Medford High School.



Ritmo Alegre provides dance classes for all ages and performs in local festivals, parades and school events. Each year the group's instructors, along with several members of the company, train in Mexico City at the National School of Ballet Folklórico to learn new repertoire. Ritmo Alegre is known in

the community for its colorful, authentic costuming and exuberant performances.

Ritmo Alegre has a special interest in Aztec dances. Two instructors have studied these ancient ritual dances that have been revived by Mexican native peoples to preserve the spiritual and artistic heritage of sacred rhythms and movements.

Ballet Folklórico Ritmo Alegre's mission is as follows; to empower youth through dance and to serve as cultural ambassadors in our diverse community. To learn more visit folkloricoritmoalegre.org.



Joseph Julian Gonzalez to Visit Medford, OR



Joseph Julian Gonzalez, composer of *Misa Azteca*, will be coming to Medford from his home in Rosarita Beach, Mexico on March 12 and 13 to provide Rogue Valley Residents with a lecture about the celebrated composition.

Mr. Gonzalez studied classical guitar with Theodore Norman, and composition for motion picture and television from famed film composer

David Raksin (*Laura*, *Forever Amber*) at UCLA. After touring with several groups, Joseph started off his career by becoming music director of Luis Valdez's (*La Bamba*, *Zoot Suit*) much heralded theater company El Teatro Campesino. There he composed the music score for *La Pastorela*, a PBS Great Performances Christmas special, launching a career composing pieces performed by such artists as Los Lobos, Jose Feliciano, Kronos String Quartet, Linda Rondstadt, as well as working and collaborating with Quentin Tarantino and Slash from Guns 'n Roses.

He has composed a multitude of musical scores for film and TV including the Academy Award-nominated documentary *Colors Straight Up*, the Emmy Award-winning *Made In LA*, and Showtime's longest running Latino series *Resurrection Blvd*. His latest project, the 6-part miniseries, *Latino Americans*, recently won the 2014 Peabody award.



His symphonic and choral work, *Misa Azteca*, is a musical composition which combines Spanish and Latin texts of the Roman Catholic liturgy with songs from the *Cantares Mexicanos*, the largest collection of pre-Columbian Nahuatl songs or poems to have been recorded. Gonzalez was influenced by Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, and sought to create a similar blend of old and new, giving the piece a neo-Baroque flavor.

Laurie Anne Hunter: More Than the Music

We all know Laurie Anne Hunter as a gifted musician with close affiliation to many arts organizations in the Rogue Valley. But there are multiple facets to this remarkable human being.

Laurie Anne was born in Pasadena, California. She tragically lost her mother when she was three years old. To ease the difficulties in the ensuing years Laurie Anne kept herself busy with piano, choirs, school, girl scouts, and competitive horsemanship.

Laurie Anne began piano lessons at age 5. She was enthralled with the piano, but her infatuation with the instrument began as visual. "My brother started piano lessons when he was 4. We had an old upright piano with keys of dark colored wood with real ivory on top. I'd sit on the floor and watch him practice. I was mesmerized by how the dark brown rectangles would appear and disappear as he played. I thought if I could play the piano, then I would be able to see the patterns up-close."

Photo by Christopher Briscoe



Laurie Anne had no musical career aspirations growing up, and never thought herself good enough to succeed as a professional artist. Her family moved to

Ontario, Canada when she entered high school. She wasn't able to find piano instruction that met her needs, so ended up joining the high school's very fine glee club. "I found great joy accompanying and helping my fellow singers learn their music. We also performed Gilbert and Sullivan operettas every year, which I led from the piano," Laurie said. She traveled to Europe with the glee club when they were chosen to represent Canada at an International Folklore Festival in Germany.

Following high school Laurie Anne attended a small Mennonite college in Winnipeg, drawn there by its excellent choir. She graduated from the University of Winnipeg, and was honored with admission to the Juilliard School in New York. She spent five seasons as an Assistant Conductor and Vocal Coach with the New York City Opera, becoming the fourth woman ever to conduct at Lincoln Center, where she made her debut with Marc Blitzstein's *Regina* in 1992. She was Associate Conductor of *Showboat* on Broadway and served as Assistant

Conductor and Vocal Coach for the Metropolitan Opera Guild's educational productions.

When asked why she left New York Laurie Anne replied, "New York was a highly stressful environment. I never really felt at home there. But they say, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere. Perhaps I needed to prove to myself that I could make it, and then I could move on and have a life."

In the ensuing years, Laurie Anne traveled extensively to work with regional opera companies and training programs in the US, Canada and Europe. The Oregon Shakespeare Festival brought her to Ashland as Musical Director and Pianist for *Enter the Guardsman* in 2001. She met Frank Sullivan at OSF. He had been hired as a sound technician. Frank was also a musician, and greatly admired Laurie Anne's talent. A romance sprouted on Valentine's Day when she gave Frank a "Be My Valentine" card. Frank wanted to know the job description. One thing led to another, including a proposal of marriage. Of course, the answer was, "yes."

Laurie Anne is a Certified Music Practitioner, someone who comforts the ill and dying with music, an interest sparked while caring for her hospitalized father. Laurie volunteered to come in and play light classical and show tunes, "stuff that my father, and perhaps other people would enjoy. People were drawn to the music," she said. Her father passed away, and following his death, her husband built her a harp. Not a week after it was strung, she met a teacher from the Music for Healing and Transition Program who invited her to a class on hospice and the grieving process. "I just lost my father, I had my first harp (the instrument many music practitioner's use), and I met this person. It was like it was meant to be," Laurie Anne says. For the next twelve years Laurie Anne played therapeutic harp music for Providence Cancer Center and Hospice, bringing her soothing music to patients, ill or dying.

Laurie Anne lives on 2 1/2 beautiful acres near Phoenix. At one time, she had 2 goats, 2 llamas, 2 dogs, 4 cats, and varying numbers of chickens and ducks. "The animals are my family. I'm not very good at gardening, but I love being outside and find digging in the dirt very therapeutic. The frustrating part is that it's a job that is never finished!"

Photo by Christopher Briscoe



Thank you Donors and Supporters!

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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Music and Alzheimer's Disease

Many people play music as a soothing balm for those with Alzheimer's, and musical ability is often long retained into the more advanced stages of the disease. Now a new study suggests that singing may have benefits for those with Alzheimer's. The study, presented at a meeting of the Society for Neuroscience in San Diego, found that singing as part of a group led to improvements in the thinking and memory skills and boost mood in those with dementia. Even in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease, when many people are unable to speak or communicate, people retained the ability to recognize musical tunes. "Data shows that participation in an active singing program for an extended period of time can improve cognition in patients with moderate to severe dementia," the researchers wrote.

Music is known to boost mood and ease stress. Many senior care centers and Alzheimer's support groups hold music and sing-along sessions in communities nationwide. And a growing body of research suggests that music — like art and other creative forms of therapy — can stir emotions and memories, enhance enjoyment and self-esteem, and enrich the lives of people with dementia.

Music may even play a role in helping to ward off Alzheimer's. Researchers from Loyola University found that retired orchestra musicians who spent a lifetime playing musical instruments were less likely to develop dementia in old age. The findings are consistent with others suggesting that cognitive stimulation can help to keep the mind sharp.

While music alone should never take the place of a well-structured program of caregiving or medical treatment, it can complement other forms of treatments.

Music tips for people with Alzheimer's include:

- Pick songs or music that is familiar and enjoyable for the person with Alzheimer's disease.
- Turn off the TV, and close the door or curtains to avoid over-stimulation.
- Choose music to set the mood you're hoping to create: Quiet music may be suitable before bedtime, while soft but upbeat tunes may be appropriate for celebrations.
- Encourage those with Alzheimer's to clap or sing along or play a musical instrument.
- Supplement music with fond reminiscences and family photos.

RVCA Conductors to Attend Rod Eichenberger Choral Conductor's Conference

During the summer of 2016 the Rogue Valley Chorale Association's five conductors will attend the Rod Eichenberger Choral Conductor's Conference in Cannon Beach, OR to provide them with opportunities to further their professional development. The conference offers a week of intensive learning with choral conductors from throughout the country. Attending will be Discovery Chorus Conductor Wendy Cawthorne, Children's Chorus Conductor Gerry Flock, Cantare Chorus Conductor Shaun Garner, Youth Ensemble Coductor Pam Nordquist, and Rogue Valley Chorale Conductor Laurie Anne Hunter.

The conference will provide RVCA's conductors with the opportunity to live together for a week in a rented beach house, share meals, process conference information together, generate a common vision and dream up future projects. This will be the first time in the history of RVCA that all five of the organization's conductors have shared such an experience.

The conference offers new and modern methods of achieving communication between singers and conductors by providing detailed instruction on gesture and movement. The techniques taught are innovative and extend the boundaries of traditional choral conducting methods. Our conductors will practice translating the emotion written into the music to achieve expression of the feeling among singers. The conference culminates with a concert conducted by a select group of the attendees for each other and the Cannon Beach community.



The week learning together and networking with colleagues from throughout the country will generate enthusiasm and ignite passion among all the conference participants. New ways of communicating through conducting will provide motivation for a long time, and re-visiting the conference experience with fellow RVCA conductors will keep the flame ignited.

Jim Collier's Holiday Gift to the Community



In November of 2015 the Rogue Valley Chorale Association received a very generous endowed gift from our dear friend James (Jim) Collier. The gift will provide a substantial portion of the funds needed to present our holiday concert to the community in perpetuity. From now until the end of time RVCA's holiday concert title will include the wording, "Jim Collier's Holiday Gift to the Community."

The Oregon Community Foundation's skilled group of investors is managing Jim Collier's gift, the principal of which will never be touched. Funds generated by the gift will be applied to the holiday concert every year.

During the Rogue Valley Chorale's 2015 holiday concert RVCA board president Kenne Horton honored and thanked Mr. Collier in front of a packed house. Every member of the audience turned to face Jim, who was seated in the balcony, and gave him a rousing applause and a standing ovation.

An inheritance enabled Jim to become a generous patron of the performing arts. Jim not only supports many arts groups in the Rogue Valley, but also sponsors orchestras and opera companies in his hometown of Des Moines, Iowa, as well as in Bakersfield, California. He was nominated as Outstanding Individual Philanthropist of Central Iowa in 2006, and is known as "The Piano Man," a title he earned by donating three concert grand and four upright pianos to various organizations in the Rogue Valley.

Jim was exposed to music as a young boy. He took piano lessons, but when it came time to showcase his talents during his first recital, Jim pretended to be sick. His savvy mother didn't buy it and made him perform. Jim reports that no one was sorry to see him give up the piano after his "less than perfect" performance. But his piano experience planted a seed that grew into an intense love of the arts. Jim says, "I am a much better patron of the arts than a performing artist. I'll leave that to others."

Jim retired to Medford after teaching high school English in Delano, California (near Bakersfield) for 30 years. A group



Photo by Michael D. Davis

of friends introduced him to the opera, and he made frequent trips to Los Angeles to see spectacular performances featuring some of the world's finest singers.

Opera deepened his interest in the performing arts. He began visiting Ashland to attend the Oregon Shakespeare Festival plays, a passion he shared with his students in California.

The term "arts in Southern Oregon" has become synonymous with the name Jim Collier. Our community is richer because of this tireless and dedicated philanthropist. Because of his generous gift to the Rogue Valley Chorale Association our community will forever remember the name James Collier as future generations *Celebrate the Joy of Singing*.

Reflections from the Artistic Director

(Continued from page 2)

the "State and Festival Lists" under the "More" tab on their home page. There will be rehearsals on the three Saturdays prior to the concert weekend (April 23, April 30 and May 7) from 10:00 am – 12:00 at the First Christian Church in Medford. Singers will also have the option of joining in for the first 30-minutes of any of the Chorale's Monday evening rehearsals, beginning March 14.

Saturday, May 14, we welcome our guest conductor Don Brinegar from Los Angeles, who will lead two Mass Choir rehearsals. In between rehearsals will be a Potluck lunch hosted by the Chorale and optional workshops on Conducting, Sight-Singing, and Vocal techniques, presented by Donnelly Fenn, Laurie Anne Hunter, Ellie Holt-Murray and Lynn Sjolund.

Sunday, May 15 we will meet at the Craterian Theater at the Collier Center for the Performing Arts, 1:30pm for a dress rehearsal, with two performances at 3:00 and 7:30 pm. Whether you are on the stage with us or in the audience, it is sure to be an unforgettable event!



Thank you to Topper Family for your generous donation made in loving memory of Barbara and George.

Leaving A Legacy Bequest to the Rogue Valley Chorale

Making a gift to the Rogue Valley Chorale through your will or revocable living trust is a simple way to support our mission of inspiring and enriching our communities through the performance of great choral music performed by choruses of all ages.

Making a will or trust is a very personal act with enduring implications. Some of you may wish to leave a lasting impression on the community. There is no better way to do so than to leave a bequest to charity. The Rogue Valley Chorale is a 501(c)(3) corporation with tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service and is able to accept charitable donations from estates of all sizes. This means that you can designate proceeds from life insurance, investments, your will or revocable living trust, or many other sources.

Some of you have already made your estate plans. Some of you have not. Others see estate planning as a complicated maze of documents that can always be postponed to a later date. The fact is that your wishes cannot be fulfilled unless you complete estate planning. Making the Chorale part of your estate plan has many positive implications. It benefits the community by helping the choral arts remain a part of our Rogue Valley for generations to come. It can benefit your estate in that it can lower taxes. Additionally, it benefits your soul to know that YOU have made a difference. Of course, every situation is different so talk to your attorney or CPA to get details as to how and whether your particular estate would benefit.

If you are interested in making the Chorale part of your estate plan, it is important to contact an attorney, CPA, and/or financial planner of your choice. They have the knowledge and tools to make your wishes become a reality.

- By Christopher Cauble, Attorney at Law, Cauble and Cauble, LLP

Ways To Give

Endowment Fund - The Endowment Fund provides the Chorale with long term, steady income and growth.

Bequests - Making a gift to the Rogue Valley Chorale through your will or revocable living trust is a simple way to support the Chorale.

Honor Gifts - An Honor Gift is a wonderful way to celebrate the special people and events in your life and simultaneously support choral music in our community.

Memorial Gifts - A Memorial Gift is a beautiful testimony to the life of a beloved person who has passed on. It can be just the right touch for expressing compassion to someone who has experienced a loss.

Donating Made Easy

The Rogue Valley Chorale Association can help you make donating simple and easy. Monthly electronic fund transfers, billing, and regular credit card payments are some of the ways we can assist in making your philanthropic goals become reality.

There are several tax-advantages available to those who wish to give. Please speak with your estate planner about



A little fundraising humor...

I was very glad to make a large bequest and I am glad it will help some day. Now can I ask a little something in return? Stop calling me every day to see how I'm feeling!

For more information contact Development Manager Gary Gillespie at homeonthewing@gmail.com or call 541-944-8393.



For 43 years the Rogue Valley Chorale has been at the heart of the arts scene and has enjoyed the support of our community, without which 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 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.



RVCA
Rogue Valley
Chorale Association

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Shaun Garner, Cantare
Gerry Flock, Children's Chorus
Wendy Cawthorne, Discovery Chorus

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Cami Austin, Discovery Chorus
Julie Farrow, Discovery Chorus

*To contact the Rogue Valley Chorale Association call us at
541-414-8309, email us at info@roguevalleychorale.org,
or visit our website at www.roguevalleychorale.org.*



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