

R.V. Chorale hits a high note in history

Group marks 25th with concert at Craterian

By CLEVE TWITCHELL
of the Mail Tribune

The Rogue Valley Chorale is about to celebrate an important anniversary: it's a quarter of a century old.

The singing group was organized back in 1973 and has presented several concerts a year over that span.

This weekend, the Chorale will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a special concert featuring music it has performed over the years as well as some of its alumni.

The concerts will be at the Craterian Ginger Rogers Theater in downtown Medford — an appropriate site, since it was the Chorale that gave the inaugural performance when the new performing arts center opened a little over a year ago.

The 85-voice Chorale will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday and 3 p.m. Sunday. Tickets are \$14, \$12 and \$10. Call 779-3000 for tickets or more information.

The Sunday program will be a repeat of Saturday's.

Lynn Sjolund, conductor of the Chorale for 22 of its 25 years, will be at the helm for these two performances. He was absent only during a three-year period when he taught at Loyola University in New Orleans.

"Lynn has done a great job of holding it all together and directing beautiful programs and keep-



Photo from Rogue Valley Chorale

The original members of the Rogue Valley Chorale in 1973 included, from left: Barbara Hewitt, Kathryn Gordon, Doris Sjolund, Kathleen Davis (seated), John Gilsdorf, Richard Swanson, Lynn Sjolund (conductor), John Leavens, Karen Foster, Gary Lovre, Carroll Graber, Ed Houck, Marjorie Swanson, Keith Campbell and Nancy Purdy. Not pictured are Mary Kay Harmon, Leslie Hall, Richard Frisbie, Ron Hollensted and William Matthews.

ing us all interested," says Leslie Hall, a charter member of the Chorale.

"It's been 25 years of pure pleasure."

"As a member of the Rogue Valley Chorale for 25 years, I have had the privilege of singing wonderful, challenging, music," adds Karen

Foster. "I have also learned a lot about vocal technique and have become a much improved singer. The Chorale is a highlight of my life."

The first part of the anniversary concert will include Mozart's "Laudate Dominum," with Susan Olson as soprano soloist; the Bach motet

"Komm Jesu, Komm"; and Benjamin Britten's "Te Deum" with Linda Fountain, also a soprano, as soloist.

Also scheduled during part one are Brahms' "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place" from the "German Requiem" and Rachmaninoff's "Ave Maria."

The second half of the concert will feature secular choruses and other favorites performed over the 25-year history of the group.

Chorale alumni have been invited back to sing a couple of numbers with the present group, "My Gentle Harp" and "Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree." Then, men of the Chorale will sing with soprano soloist Kathryn Gordon in Chenoweth's "Vocalize." Gordon was a founding member of the Chorale.

Over the years, the Chorale has featured noted guest soloists such as Philip Frohnmayer, Clayton Brainerd and James Brown, and has presented premieres of works including Charles Cassey's "Visions" last year.

Andrea Brock, director of choral music at South Medford High School, is the Rogue Valley Chorale's accompanist.

Sjolund is retired director of choral activities at Medford Senior High School (now North High), where the auditorium is named in his honor.

He has been a clinician and adjudicator for vocal music contests throughout the country and an officer in music education associations.

Besides its many Rogue Valley appearances, the Chorale has made two European trips and plans a tour of Italy this summer, including a stop at Alba, Medford's sister city.

A special anniversary dinner will follow Sunday's concert. It will be at the Rogue Valley Country Club.

Those interested in attending may call Foster at 779-2621 or Mary Kay Harmon at 779-4952.