



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

Rogue Valley Chorale Association Newsletter



Carmina Burana

A Celebration of Joy, Love & Humanity

Friday, June 11, 2021, 7:00 pm

Sunday, June 13, 2021, 3:00 pm

Grizzly Peak Winery, Ashland

Purchase tickets at showtix4u.com/

Carl Orff's exhilarating oratorio, *Carmina Burana*, offers a visceral musical setting of secular medieval poems from the 11th and 12th centuries that produce a dramatically colorful

effect. The Rogue Valley Chorale, Youth Choruses, and Orchestra join together with exceptional soloists to present this intoxicating performance. Bring a blanket or lawn chair!

Carmina Burana will be presented in an outside setting with social distancing and face mask requirements.

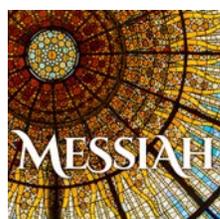


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Handel's Messiah

Saturday, December 4, 2021, 7:30 PM

Sunday, December 5, 2021, 3:00 PM

Craterian Theater at the Collier Center

**Purchase tickets at craterian.org
or call the box office at 541-779-3000**

The Rogue Valley Chorale presents the Christmas movement of George Frideric Handel's masterpiece, *Messiah*, with dramatic movement featuring Portland's Polaris Dance Theater and accompaniment by Jefferson Baroque Orchestra on period instruments. The concert features exceptional soloists and the masterful voices of the Chorale in a new production that tells the timeless story of the birth of Christ through the eyes of the prophets, shepherds, and the heavenly hosts.

Give the World A Song Rogue Valley Youth Choruses West Main Church of Christ

A very special private concert was held for these exceptional young singers as they celebrate the joy of singing.



Please check roguevalleychorale.org for streaming information.

Orff's Monumental Carmina Burana

Michael Morris

Carmina Burana, composed by German composer Carl Orff, is considered one of the most iconic choral works of the 20th century. The work, composed in 1935-1936, features a large choir, a children's chorus, soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists, and a massive orchestra. The opening movement, "O Fortuna", has been featured in television shows and movies, including *Excalibur*, *Glory*, *The Hunt for Red October*, *The Doors*, *Natural Born Killers*, *The General's Daughter*, *Detroit Rock City*, *Jackass: The Movie*, *Cheaper By the Dozen*, and *G-Force*.

Carmina Burana means "songs from Beuern," a variant of Bayern, the German name for Bavaria. In the Bavarian Alps, about 30 miles outside of Munich, is a Benedictine monastery that was founded in 733 AD. The monastery housed a great many ancient manuscripts and in 1847, Court Librarian Johann Andreas Schmeller published a modern edition of some of the most remarkable poems into a richly illuminated parchment collection. Most of the poems were in Latin, with some in Middle High German with an infusion of French and Greek. Schmeller invented the title *Carmina Burana* for this edition. Orff encountered *Carmina Burana* and enlisted the help of the poet Michel Hofmann in organizing twenty-four of the poems into a libretto.

Orff designed the musical work around the subject of the text, a Medieval concept known as "Rota Fortunae," or "Wheel of Fortune." The goddess Fortune guided humankind's lives by spinning a wheel to determine if someone would gain fortune, poverty, illness, fame, good crops, or drought. Orff created the Rota Fortunae in *Carmina Burana* by dividing the work into five major sections, each with a different overall theme that range from the fickleness of wealth and fortune, the transient nature of life, the joy of spring, the perils and pleasures of drinking and gambling, and the desires of love and passion. In total there are 25 movements and 24 poems. The first and last movement, "O Fortuna, velut luna" (O Fortune, like the moon), are the same. This return to the beginning of the cantata is like the Wheel of Fortune- it always returns to the starting point.

After the riotously successful premiere in June 1937, Orff told his publisher, Schott Music, "Everything I have written to date, and which you have, unfortunately, printed, can be destroyed. With *Carmina Burana* my collected works begin."

By Michael Morris, Artistic Director



As I was considering the topic of this newsletter article, I started thinking about the changes that have occurred in the Rogue Valley Chorale Association over the past year. It was a bit more than a year ago, March 7 & 8 that the Chorale, Youth Ensemble, North Medford High School, soloists and a 35-player orchestra presented

the Mozart *Requiem* to full houses in the Craterian Theater. Two days later, the RVCA shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RVCA Board of Directors, the youth choir directors, Executive Director Laura Rich, and I spent several weeks on the phone, on Zoom, and meeting in parks at a safe distance while wearing masks to discuss what needed to be done to survive, how we could rehearse and perform when we could not gather in large groups, and to share our concerns about the financial ramifications of shutting down for an extended period. From the beginning the directors and I started researching what other performing arts groups were doing, how they planned on surviving, and how I could use this information to keep our choirs active. RVCA was not the only performing arts organization dealing with these problems. All performing arts groups and artists were asking the same questions and seeking the same answers!

The Board, directors, and singers stayed active and soon we all shared the belief that we would not only survive this horrible historic era, we would thrive. As we cobbled together ideas and concepts, plans started developing to aid our organization both artistically and financially. The plans were always tempered by the Covid reality and were constantly morphing to keep up with the latest health mandates. This has taught us to be flexible in our planning and scheduling. It also taught us to be aware of opportunities. One of the great opportunities that presented itself was the offer to create a TV show for the winter holiday season for Southern Oregon PBS. The one-hour TV show, named "*Holiday Faire*," was aired three times during prime time in December on SOPBS. "*Holiday Faire*" was also accepted to be broadcast on the national PBS streaming service "Passport." What amazing luck! As the saying goes, 'Luck is when preparation and opportunity meet'.

And now the Chorale, Children's Choir, Cantare, and Youth Ensemble will be performing the iconic *Camina Burana* by Carl Orff, accompanied by a 42-player orchestra, and four amazing soloists on Friday, June 11 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, June 13 at 3:00 p.m. at Grizzly Peak Winery in Ashland. The planning and preparations have afforded us great luck. But another saying comes to mind that is also apropos... 'Luck has nothing to do with it!'. These chances, this luck, has everything to do with the unbelievable people who participate, manage, and support the Rogue Valley Chorale Association. The amazing volunteerism, love for the organization, and willingness to pitch in to make sure that RVCA not only survives, but it thrives, are only a few of the reasons that "luck" has been on our side. This hard working and devoted group of singers, directors, volunteers, and patrons have been there to support, assist, work, plan, and fund RVCA during this challenging time. This is more than luck – this is RESILIENCE, and we are grateful for all that they have, and will, do.

By Donna Barrett, Board President



The Rogue Valley Chorale Association is rehearsing for its June 11 and June 13 performances of *Carmina Burana*. We are immensely grateful to Al and Virginia Silbowitz, founders and owners of Grizzly Peak Winery in Ashland, for their generous and enthusiastic support of RVCA by providing a venue for the *Carmina Burana* production. Al and Virginia have graciously

offered the immense and beautiful grounds of the winery to be used for both the final rehearsals and the performances of *Carmina Burana*. Assisting and supporting local performing arts organizations is part of the Silbowitzes mandate for Grizzly Peak Winery and their venue hosts regular performances during the spring and summer.

Our friendship with Al and Virginia formed during the filming of *Holiday Faire*, a production filmed for SOPBS in partnership with several iconic locations throughout the Rogue Valley, including Grizzly Peak Winery. Artistic Director Michael Morris and recently retired Executive Director Laura Rich approached the Silbowitzes about filming at their vineyard, to which they graciously agreed. You can find out more information about the many various performances at Grizzly Peak Winery at [www.https://grizzlypeakwinery.com/](https://grizzlypeakwinery.com/).

A bit more about Laura Rich and her recent departure... after serving as a board member and eventually Executive Director for the past 13 years, Laura made the reluctant decision to retire. She had been struggling with a very severe meniscus tear that needed to be addressed surgically with a total knee replacement. Laura felt that she would need to focus on the lengthy recovery. Hence, her resignation. Laura is a passionate gardener and spends ample time canning, freezing and dehydrating her garden produce. The Chorale singers and Youth Choruses Steering Committee joined together to purchase her several garden ornaments, a gift card to the Grange Co-op and a fabulous, commercial grade Excalibur dehydrator. Word has it that she has already blown through the gift card and is making gallons of dehydrated soups! Laura will remain an active volunteer and will continue singing with the Chorale.

While we will miss Laura immensely, we are thrilled to welcome Brad Nelson as our incoming Executive Director. Brad has over two decades of experience in the arts and has been a friend of the Chorale Association since the late 1990's. You can learn more about Brad at: <https://roguevalleychorale.org/about/executive-director/>.



The Rogue Valley Chorale Association sends love and healing thoughts to Youth Ensemble Conductor Pamela Nordquist who is recovering from a recent hip replacement. We love you Pamela.

Carmina Burana Includes Exceptional Soloists

The Rogue Valley Chorale is thrilled to include four exceptional soloists in its upcoming *Carmina Burana* concert. The participation of those outstanding singers will contribute to an unforgettable performance.



Soprano Rachel Nelson was first introduced to *Carmina Burana* when she performed it in Singapore while living there. Rachel says that, to perform the work again, this time as a soloist, is incredibly thrilling and a great honor. Rachel's first major opportunity to perform as a soloist came last year, when she sang the soprano solo in Chorale's performance of Mozart's *Requiem*.

Rachel and her husband, Michael, have 3-year old twins who also love music, and enjoy imitating whatever song their mother happens to be currently practicing. (When that song is *Dulcissime* from *Carmina Burana*, you can imagine the cacophony that ensues!) Rachel is grateful for her family's unfailing love and support in her musical journey.

Tenor Joe Raymond Meyers has sung with San Francisco, Portland, Anchorage, Tampa, Grand Rapids, Utah Festival, and Toledo Operas, Opera San Jose, Sacramento Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, the symphonies of Santa Rosa, Kalamazoo, Silicon Valley, Spokane, Oakland and many more. A skilled singing-actor, in 2009 he played the opera singer in the movie *Milk*.



Among his many roles are Andres in *Wozzeck* and Howard Boucher in *Dead Man Walking* with Opera Parallèle, where he also appeared as Vain Man/ Snake in their recent production of *The Little Prince*. He has appeared multiple times in productions with West Edge Opera, as well as in their Snapshot New Opera Works.



Baritone Dan Fowler serves this community as pastor at the 1st Presbyterian Church of Ashland. Dan was a music major in college at San Francisco State University and has sung bass/baritone solos for many choral works and performed in several operas and musicals throughout Northern California and Southern Oregon. In addition to singing, Dan also plays

piano and guitar. Dan has been a featured soloist with the Rogue Valley Chorale in the recent production of the Bach *Magnificat*, and most recently as soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* (2020).

Baritone José Rubio is equally comfortable in the concert hall and on the operatic stage. He is a three-time alumnus of the prestigious Music Academy of the West summer festival where he worked closely with Marilyn Horne, Warren Jones, and music staff from the San Francisco and Metropolitan Opera. He has also spent three summers in Italy performing and studying language at the Opera Theater and Music Festival of Lucca. Mr. Rubio has been a two-time winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council District Competition.



Treasured Memories

By Laura Rich



The past year has been incredibly difficult for many of us. We cannot be with friends and loved ones. Contact with professional colleagues is hindered by the risk of contracting or spreading Covid. For many in the choral arts community the joy we experience while presenting live performances for our Rogue Valley audience has ceased.

Perhaps one of the hardest parts of the past year has been the large numbers of singers who have passed on. The Chorale is a family. Many of us have sung together for decades. We celebrate each other's milestones; marriages, the birth of children and grandchildren, graduations. We support one another through surgeries, illness, natural disasters and financial woes. And yes, when a singer dies, we grieve together. This year was unprecedented in the number of singers who passed on. We were unable to come together to celebrate the incredible lives of our Chorale family members. We could not console one another, share stories, laugh and cry. We each found a way to honor those we lost; a prayer, sitting in silent contemplation, planting a tree, visiting a favorite place, singing a favorite song. But we are humans who gather in times of grief to comfort one another, and not being able to do so hurt.

One of our long-time singers, Peter Yeager, wrote a poem/tribute to those we lost. His words are a perfect expression of what many of us feel.

TREASURED IN MEMORY AS IN LIFE: Tribute to Singers No Longer with Us for the Rogue Valley Chorale extended family

They were always there.
We assumed they always would be there.
Until they were not.

Why do people always leave
before we are ready?

The last time we were together
with them was the last time
we'd be together with them.
We just didn't know it then.

We thought: just a hiatus.
(But how long?) Let us just
get through this pesky pandemic.
Then we'll all be back
together again. (When?)
But not all of us.

And what about their families?
The ones they left to be
with us Monday nights.
The ones they brought back
stories of visiting after
summer and Christmas breaks.
The ones we met at post-concert parties.
No longer strangers, we join them
in grief.

We never know when
we won't see each other again.



(Continued on page 4)

TREASURED IN MEMORY AS IN LIFE (Continued from Page 3)

And so our gatherings were interrupted
to keep us all safe. We were told
the spreading of life-giving sung poetry
risked super-spreading the deadly virus.

So we practiced at home
for masked gatherings.
And the news came in:
Email after email.
Grief upon grief.

It began before COVID-19,
when we lost Kathleen Thorson.

Then Bob Larson,

Don Dolan,

Barbara Johnson,

Don Bolles,

Nina Frost,

Nancy Yie, and

Connie Fisher-Crooks.



Their names ring like poetry,
like songs, like melodies
in our hearts, in our souls.

Did I remember to be kind to her?
Did I remember to tell him I loved him, too?

Try not to console yourselves with cliches
about heavenly choirs. These do not help
here on earth, where the pain of loss is real.

Let us let ourselves grieve.
No-one will fill the empty chairs.

And so let us join together
in virtual, communal grieving,
weeping for those we have lost.

As we read again each name,
let us pause a moment to remember.
Picture each precious person.

If you are able to remember voices,
recall how they spoke.
Voices are unique as fingerprints,
personal as individuality,
individual as personality:
Spoken or sung.
Hear them again.

Pause a moment to mourn
in your own way.
Then move on to the next,
and do the same.
Honor and pay tribute
with your specific attention.

And pray in your own quiet way
for their families, their closest
loved ones, and how they miss them.

Remember the Requiems,
especially Brahms'.
Whatever your beliefs,
try to hold a candle of hope
for a more lovely dwelling place.
For them. For us.

Navigating the Pandemic

By Laura Rich

Singing is an important activity in the lives of the young people who participate in the Rogue Valley Chorale Association's Youth Choruses program. Over the past year the challenges posed by the pandemic have made participation very difficult. We have many safety measures in place to keep our singers safe, but wisdom has necessitated eliminating in-person rehearsals for much of the past year. Zoom, recording and filming rehearsals have been a fallback for keeping kids engaged. None of the socially safe instruction children are receiving, either in school or for their extracurricular activities, has been anywhere close to ideal. But it is the best we can offer until coming back together again proves safe.



Time and again, study after study has demonstrated the benefits of singing in a chorus. Students who sing do better at math and science due to music's link to reasoning and analytical skills. In fact, kids involved with music use more of their brain than those without musical training.



Singing can help children express what they feel and think. It provides an outlet for emotional expression and expands communication abilities. Singing relieves tension and gives children a vehicle for developing friendships.

Singing also helps to develop spatial-temporal skills, which allows young singers to visualize how melody and rhythm fit into a defined musical space. The same skill is required in solving math problems and understanding fractions.

During the pandemic our Youth Choruses staff has worked hard to find ways of providing meaningful experiences for our young singers. Harmonizing does not happen on a laptop, and the interpersonal elation felt when creating a beautiful sound with others is lost when singing in isolation. Nevertheless, kids are flexible and optimistic, and seem to embrace whatever life tosses their way. They are currently putting together a performance for Thursday, April 29, 2021, 7:00 pm at the West Main Church of Christ. The audience size will be limited, so in order to accommodate all who wish to hear our young performers, the concert will also be streamed live. Information about the concert will be posted at roguevalleychorale.org.



We should all pat ourselves on the back for enduring an extremely challenging and unprecedented time in our lives. One way or another we will keep the music alive and find ways to give our Youth Choruses singers its many intrinsic benefits.



Spring Brings A Sense of Hope

By Brad Nelson, Executive Director



Photography by Tim Tidball

Spring is finally here, and with it a season of renewal and a sense of hope.

- Hope for a new day when we can all gather together again.
- Hope that we can toast one another with a future filled with song and with joy.
- Hope that we can once again be entertained and enriched by our four choruses.

It has been a long journey, one that has kept us apart and one that has hidden our faces behind masks. But during this journey I continue to look for the silver lining and the growth that we all strive to find in our daily lives. I look for the smile in the eyes of those that struggle and also from those that inspire. The Rogue Valley Chorale and the Youth Choruses have all endured many struggles. We have lost so many opportunities to perform, to visit with our friends, and to enrich those lives around us. But, just as Spring is around the corner and the cold winter nights give way to the warm sunshine, so will our voices emerge as they once again fill new performance spaces. The Zoom rehearsals, the struggles in meeting and rehearsing during a world-wide pandemic have been numerous; however, with perseverance and dealing with masks, protocols, and procedures the choruses have, and will, continue to safely navigate these unprecedented times. We all look forward to bringing our songs, our smiles, and hope to all of you.

The other day, alongside Artistic Director Michael Morris, I walked in the grassy sun-filled acreage of Grizzly Peak Winery. Planning, dreaming, and smiling as I longed for June to arrive so that we could once again do what we do best – perform for our friends, families, and our community. We plan to gather our choruses, our orchestra, and our soloists to entertain you once again. I hope that when June arrives, the sun shines in our favor and we are all allowed to safely gather at the magnificent winery that Virginia and Al have so graciously allowed us to use. I hope to see you all in June and look forward to toasting alongside you with a glass of wine, a smile on our faces, and hope in our hearts.

Do you love to sing?

Come audition for the Rogue Valley Chorale or Rogue Valley Youth Choruses.

For more information call us at 541-414-8309 or email info@roguevalleychorale.org.



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Both of these programs really add up and can make a huge difference in RVCA's ability to bring beautiful choral music to our community. So, thank you for helping.

Other 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.

Would you like to make a tax-deductible donation to the Rogue Valley Chorale Association?

To make a charitable contribution visit roguevalleychorale.org and click on **Donate**. You can also mail your donation to **Rogue Valley Chorale, 724 S Central, Suite 102, Medford, OR 97501**.

We thank you for your support.



Rogue Valley Chorale Association

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