



In Choir

www.ottawachildrenschoir.org

April/May 2002

Music Festivals and Tulips: Spring in Ottawa

Chamber and Concert Choirs both made appearances at this spring's Kiwanis Music Festival held at beautiful Christ Church Cathedral in downtown Ottawa.

Each choir appeared in two categories. Both received a first place marking: Chamber with a mark of 90 in the Choral Ensemble SA Massed Choir category and Concert Choir with 90 in the "choral ensemble, junior year".

While it is emphasized to the choristers that Kiwanis is not so much a competition as it is an opportunity



Barbara Clark demonstrates perfect form to the Chamber Choir before the Kiwanis Festival performance

for individual choirs to be judged on the merits of their musical skill, performance and style, the festival does award trophies in some categories.

Chamber Choir's second appearance was in the Choral Ensemble for 3 or more parts with the Ken Little Trophy awarded to the choir judged best. Chamber Choir's performance was "very fine work" and earned second place. Concert Choir also came second in its Trophy Class: "beautifully done" said the adjudicator.

Nineteen-year association ends this summer.

Tribute to Cynthia Greer

By Barbara Clark

How do you say thank you adequately to your right arm?? Many years ago, in the early days of the Central Choir, the operation was comparatively small. The need for a Choir Manager was not thought of, mainly because there were enough of us in the Music Department at that time to cope with the organizational requirements of the choir. We could help the director, John G. Sutherland, and later, Arnold Earl.

As the years passed and these gentlemen retired, the demands on the choir were growing and our office numbers were not! In our wisdom, we recommended that a choir manager be appointed to assist with the many "irons in the fire" that could be handled by a person other than the music director.

Into this scene came CYNTHIA GREER. Cynthia and her husband Paul have five children, four of whom have been in the Central Choir.

Cynthia came on board as Choir Manager after her years as a Choir

parent. Belief in the programme and the value it presented to the children in their formative years were major factors in her continued association with the choir. Whatever her reasons, Cynthia has been a "Rock of Gibraltar" through her 19 seasons with the Central Choir. She has handled a Pandora's box of questions, situations and emergencies here in Ottawa and in faraway places such as Italy, England and Wales. A child sick on a bus or an airplane, a missing child, a naughty child (heaven forbid!), a homesick child... these are the realities of touring. Cynthia can always handle the "emergency". She has been resourceful, calm under stress and intelligent in the face of quick decision-making.

It has been my good fortune to have had the support of Cynthia through these many years. A group as busy as ours could not survive the demands accepted without this kind of dependable and competent team worker. I feel very blessed that Cynthia



Whether it's fixing a tie or handling a 'crisis' while touring, Cynthia Greer has been handling choir emergencies for the past 19 years

has managed the "panic attacks" of the director as well as the children! I thank her most sincerely for all the hours of work that many do not know about: the many 'phone calls, the reliable attendance at rehearsals and all the extra performances. This is indeed a labour of love and Cynthia has laboured faithfully.

Thank you, faithful servant. You have earned time with your family and grandchildren - the next generation of Central Choir members!

The Joy of Singing ... PAST AND PRESENT

Central Choir then ...

by Anne Scotton

We were very proud to be chosen for the Central Choir. In the 1960's the height of "cool" was to be allowed to take the 'bus from Hopewell School to Elgin Street School, where the choir practices were held in the gymnasium.

We began with facial and voice exercises to 'warm up', and then we got down to the real business of learning the songs. Mr. John Sutherland was the Music Superintendent and Conductor of the choir when I joined. He was always happy and encouraged us to do our very best to try a difficult passage one more time. Arnold Earl had the task of making us practise our scales, and often led individual sections in learning their harmonies. Ms. Barbara Clark, young and glamorous, was a role model for the many girls in the choir. She held herself regally and underlined the importance of properly moving the air through the diaphragm and up to the vocal cords.

We had lots of fun at those practices, and we worked very hard to sing well and to express ourselves in a creative musical way. We were challenged and supported, encouraged and cajoled. When we were tired, the discipline of the routine kicked in and we worked



Anne Scotton (circled) was a member of the Central Choir in the 1960's. Her daughter, Robin Brock, has been a member of the Concert Choir for the past three years. Anne's mother, Eileen Scotton is the Chair of the Board of Directors.

harder. When we misbehaved (chewing gum! running in the gym!) we were admonished, always with humour and affection.

I always felt like a little one in a very big family, learning that the only way to make beautiful music is to work together and to enjoy the magic of the

music.

I will always cherish the experiences of the Central Choir and I am grateful for the dedication of Arnold and Barbara and the many others who have ensured that the choir's wonderful legacy lives on.

Central Choir now ...

by Robin Brock

"You'd better audition for the choir!" said my mother. And that was it - I was auditioning. Not that I didn't want to audition, I just didn't think it was going to happen so soon... When I first joined the choir, I really didn't know what to think. I remember walking into McNabb that first Tuesday as if it was yesterday. It was a bright day, warm but not hot, it was sunny, and I was very excited. I walked in and saw Mrs. Navratil, sat down and waited for 4:15. The rest is history!



Robin Brock is 12 years old. This winter Robin won the prize for collecting the most money in the Christmas fund-raising drive.

I LOVE the choir, and I would give anything to keep singing. I definitely have favourite moments; every year at the Festival, there's something I'll always remember. At the Festival we always have a lot of fun, and have to work really hard to do well, and although there is A LOT of competition, all the choirs have a sort of comradeship. I also like all the rehearsals, and especially Mrs. Navratil; she is always ready to help; even if it isn't really your problem, she'll hear you out. She conducts her practices in what I've fondly come to know as the "Navratillian" way! Thank you, Concert Choir, for giving a love of singing.

Annual General Meeting

May 30, 2002

McNabb Community Centre Assembly Hall

Mark your calendars and plan to attend the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

This is an important meeting for all parents and/or guardians of our choristers. Your input is needed on several key issues:

- changes to the constitution to include the Viva Choir and to reflect membership and operational changes. As stated in the constitution, these will be available at the office two weeks prior to the meeting.
- election of the 2002-2003 Board
- formation of a Parents' Committee to help with the day-to-day operations of the Choir
- a review of the highlights of another successful year for the Choir
- an update on our financial status and
- plans for the 2002-3 season.

Your input is welcome.

Your vote is important.

Reminders

MOTHER'S DAY PLANT SALE

May 11, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

McNabb Community Centre

Annuals, perennials, floral baskets
Lunchtime barbecue

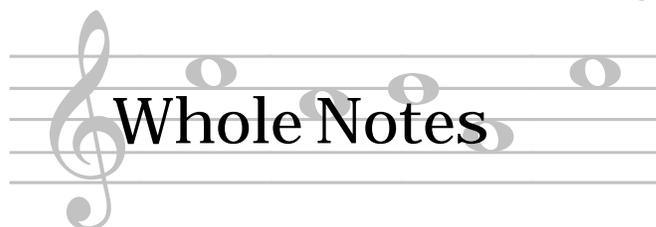
Information: 233-4440 or 235-4055

SPRING CONCERT

To Music... and to Barbara Clark

May 23, 7:30 p.m.

Brookfield High School



The search goes on

After interviews with candidates for Conductor of Chamber Choir, the Search Committee has produced a short list of three candidates. These had the opportunity to rehearse with the Chamber Choir and a final recommendation will be made to the Board.

The Choir was founded 44 years ago, in 1958, by John G. Sutherland, who was succeeded by Arnold Earl in 1967. Barbara Clark, who joined the choir in 1969 as an assistant and who became director in 1979, retires from the position at the end of July.

Fixing up Baby!

Parents who attend the Christmas and Spring concerts will be familiar with the beautiful baby Grand Piano that the accompanists play. This piano was bequeathed to the choir some years ago by Laura Shaw. Ms. Shaw had been a long time accompanist to the Choir.

As with all fine musical instruments, repairs and maintenance is a necessity. This spring our Baby Grand gets a major overhaul. About \$3,000 worth of repairs will ensure that its beautiful sound continues to be a part of the Choir's heritage. Shirley Cummings, who has always been a generous Choir benefactor, and who knew Laura Shaw well, has donated half the cost of the piano repairs.

Very Berry, Very Good

Once again the berry sales proved to be a great fundraising success. Of course, three tons of berries don't sell themselves and this year special thanks go to Chamber choristers Jenny Cheetham and Jolanta Miller, Concert chorister Bridget Hall and the Choir's Executive Director Elaine Stephens. Teresa Bootsma and her daughter Julia helped with the unloading and distribution, staying to the very end to help with the clean-up. The gross sales this year exceeded all previous years of berry sales, leaving the choir with a profit of \$3,635.

From Leaning Tower to the CN Tower

In the last year the Chamber Choir has had the opportunity to sing with some of the very best children's choirs in the world. Last summer it was a whirlwind trip to Florence and Rome. This spring's adventure was closer to home, but an opportunity as rich and rewarding as any chorister could hope for.

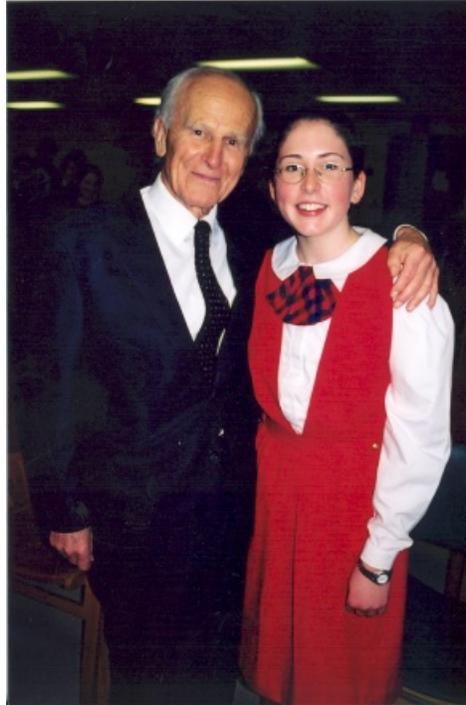
The Chamber Choir recently returned from a four day trip to Toronto where they were the guest choir for an International Conductors Symposium, hosted by the Toronto Children's Chorus (TCC). "It was a weekend filled with beautiful music and memories that will last a lifetime," writes Stephanie Boileau, a seven year veteran of the Central Children's choir.

"Everyone was very excited about the trip," noted chorister Jenny Cheetham, because Mrs. Clark had emphasized that this would be a wonderful musical learning experience. Not only would the Choir be conducted by Jean Ashworth Bartle of the TCC, it would also have the privilege of working with Sir David Willcocks, perhaps the finest conductor of children's choirs in the world.

It was a bleary-eyed group who boarded the coach for the early morning drive to Toronto. As the bus made its way along highway 401, Mrs. Clark stood at the front, conducting the choristers in preparation for the practice immediately upon their arrival.

"Everyone wanted to do well," said Jenny Cheetham. "We were excited to perform in front of Sir David Willcocks and the other guest conductors from all over including the United States and Greece." Chorister Lindsay Addie says the practice was great. "Sir David Willcocks was so much fun to work with, we liked him right away."

Each conductor had the opportunity to practice a song with the Choir and work with them for about fifteen minutes. A moment Stephanie will never forget was "when Sir David told us, with a smile on his face, that our rendition of Psalm 100 was the first time he had ever heard it performed."



Sir David Willcocks and Jenny Cheetham say farewell following the concert

The next day the Choir had two school concerts. "The students were a really super audience," said Jenny. "The concert focused on the Elements of Life: fire, water, air and earth and Stephanie Boileau read her breath-taking poem." Lindsay said "The concert was amazing, we sang very well."

It wasn't all work and singing. "We visited Casa Loma where we had a telephone tour that was so cool!" said Lindsay

At rehearsal with the Toronto Children's Choir ... "No one talked in our choir," said Jenny, "everyone was just in awe of their astounding sound."

The highlight of the trip was the final concert.

"The setting was glorious – St. James Cathedral with sunlight streaming through the beautiful stained glass windows above the altar," reported Shirley Cummings, a member of the Board of Directors who attended the concert. "Over one thousand people were there. The Choirs – the Toronto Children's and the Chamber Choir stood on broad, low risers at the foot of the nave, looking lovely in their

uniforms. The combined choirs sang Stabat Mater, by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi – a challenging set of five pieces, each of which was conducted by one of the guest conductors. Then the Ottawa Chamber Choir sang from 'Sir Christmas' by Derek Holman, conducted first by Thomas Bell (Toronto) and then by Fred Meads (United States)."

The choristers felt the concert was great fun, and as Lindsay Addie said "the best." "I know I wasn't the only one with goosebumps as I sat in St. James' Cathedral that afternoon and heard the TCC's haunting performance of Elgar's 'The Snow'," said Stephanie.

Afterwards, the choristers said goodbye to their host families and new friends, had their pictures taken with Sir David and boarded the bus. It was a quiet ride home as the group wound down from the exciting weekend. Stephanie's words echo the feelings of the Choir "Thank you, Mrs. Clark, for arranging for us to be a part of such a wonderful weekend."

with contributions from Lindsay Addie, Jenny Cheetham, Stephanie Boileau and Shirley Cummings

InChoir

InChoir was produced this month with the help of the following volunteers:

Kathryn Addie
Philip Cheetham
Jamie Hockin
Maggie Lodge
Michael Ostroff and
Eileen Scotton.

The Communications Committee needs help. If you can write, edit, do layout or take pictures, please let us know.

Send e-mail to:
m.ostroff@sympatico.ca
or call Eileen at 235-4055.

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