

What a year!



The Big Picture

Artistic Excellence, Community Connections, Joy of Singing

by Jackie Hawley Artistic Director

The Ottawa Children's Choir is devoted to artistic excellence, community connections and above all, to the joy of singing! This is the vision. What does it mean?

For over 50 years the Ottawa Children's Choir has been offering music education to hundreds of children. The curriculum of that education has changed to compensate for the changes in our school music programs. What used to be an enrichment program is now often an introduction to music for many choristers. Our community is fortunate that the Ottawa Children's Choir has made the necessary changes needed to keep kids singing!

As a forward thinking organization, it is important to keep the "big picture" always in mind. Singing is healthy for the mind, body and spirit. Whether a person is the singer or is listening to singing, potential positive effects are there ready to make an impact. Because we, in the Ottawa Children's Choir, are able to enjoy these positive effects, it is our obligation to share them.



For nearly 40 years the Ottawa Children's Choir has sung during the Remembrance Day ceremony to honour Canadian soldiers. For nearly 10 years OCC has also sung at the Battle of the Atlantic ceremony. OCC choristers are professionally trained and they reach a level of artistic excellence that allows the music to express the message the composer intended. This connects people across our country in their feelings of pride, sorrow and joy on an intensely emotional level.

As we move into the next 50 years, the OCC vision is focused on educational outreach. As part of the "big picture", workshops for teachers were started. They have allowed teachers in the schools to facilitate singing with more confidence and with the tools to help their students attain higher levels of artistry. This results in more confidence in teachers, a sense of accomplishment in students and enjoyment for school assemblies. This positive connection of the school community contributes to a joyful, healthy learning environment.

The success of these workshops has extended to other community projects. For three years now, the Chamber Choir has been an integral part of the Music Monday celebrations organized by the NAC under the auspices of the Coalition for Music Education in Canada. This year's event included nearly 800 singers from schools in and around Ottawa. Many of these schools were able to offer this opportunity to their students because their teachers had been to the educational outreach workshops and had acquired the necessary skills to attain the level of artistry needed for the repertoire involved. Here is part of a quote from one of the teachers:

"Our students really enjoyed themselves. Many of their faces were shining as they sang, and they truly felt they were part of something big!"

A few weeks ago, the Ottawa Children's Choir presented the first ever *Kaleid on the Road* choral festival. Once again, the importance of that "big picture" was crucial! Artistic excellence was at its highest with Jennifer Moir of the University of Western Ontario as the guest conductor and the Finnish vocal group Rajaton as the featured artists-in-residence. This is a world-class ensemble, the perfect level of inspiration for an organization committed to music education. Over two days, more than 500 singers from 13 choirs as well as individuals shared the joy of singing before enthusiastic audiences totalling close to 1000. Connections of human spirit were deep and joyful not only for the singers but very definitely for audience members as well. The weekend was a completely positive, joyful experience with life-changing effects and longlasting memories. The Ottawa Children's choir was proud to facilitate this extraordinary event. Here is a comment that very accurately describes the experience:

"I really had no idea how special Kaleid was going to be for [the kids]. I didn't fully understand until that night, and now I can't stop thinking about it! (Neither can they!)"

The "big picture" will continue to be our inspiration as the Ottawa Children's Choir moves ahead. "Artistic excellence, community connections and above all, the joy of singing" are not just words written in a vision document. This is what the Ottawa Children's Choir IS through the power of song!

A big musical family

by Saye Clement - President, Ottawa Children's Choir

We are almost at the end of another choir year, and what a year it has been for OCC! As President of the Board of Directors of the Ottawa Children's Choir, it is my pleasure to thank each and every chorister for all of their hard work and dedication this year. As a parent of a chorister myself, I am also now taking the time to thank all of the families of choristers for your support of your chorister and this choir. We know the kids don't do this alone!

I like to think of the OCC as a big musical family. Since all of you are more than aware of what choir directors and managers do, maybe it's time that we describe what exactly the Board of Directors does! Members of the board are all volunteers (both parents and members of the community). It is our mandate to see to the overall running of the choir. This covers everything from small details like having tickets printed for concerts, to larger jobs like hiring choir directors and a general manager (don't worry – I'm not anticipating having to hire anyone this year – I'm sure you will agree that our current team is an excellent one!). We are responsible for the by-laws which protect the health and safety of our choristers. We are also responsible for ensuring that the choir is financially viable. Above all, we are responsible for ensuring the proud history of the OCC continues for at least another 50 years!

If any of this sounds exciting to you, please attend our **annual general meeting** on **Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at 7 p.m.** in the Steinway Room next to the choir office at McNabb. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet like-minded people, and we are in search of some new board members for next year.



Choristers hard at work during rehearsals

Barbara Clark and the smiling faces of the OCC choristers



Rajaton!

Rajaton will stay in our hearts by Stefan Vidovic



During the Kaleid Chorale Festival, April 30-May 2, we all experienced something beautiful. As Jennifer Moir said, it was "all one big magical moment". It is beautiful to see such passion and power in singers. All those choirs, ranging from ages 9 to 99, singing and enjoying themselves was so heartwarming. And I not only got to watch, but I also got to sing. Hearing the world-known sensational a cappella group from Finland, Rajaton, and being conducted by Jen Moir in massed choirs showed a new side to singing. We were, and still are, so inspired by Rajaton, and had so much fun with Jen Moir, it was like heaven on earth. From day one - Friday - when children from several different schools and choirs sang in unison, to day two, when adult and high school choirs, with a few brave children's choirs, sang songs so sad they made you weep, to songs so happy they made you laugh out loud. And let's not forget (well, who could forget something like that) Sunday with Rajaton in concert, when we all wept with both happiness and sorrow. Choristers gave up at least half their week singing (which I'm sure they don't regret), for their families, friends and even strangers. We are so thankful to everyone who participated, organized, helped, or attended, this glorious event. This wonderful experience shall never be forgotten, and will stay in our hearts for eternity.

Wow! Rajaton! by Katherine Fouzie

One day at choir rehearsal, Ms. Prowse told us that on April 30 we would have an all-day workshop and a night time concert. She said that half of the workshop would be led by Rajaton. I thought: "YAY! No school!" Then: "What's Rajaton?"



There were a lot of choirs at the workshop. Many I didn't know. Ms. Prowse and Ms. Hawley encouraged us to mix with people we didn't know. I felt like staying with the people I knew but then I realized that mixing with others was good. We practised songs like *The Rainbow*, *The Beat of a Different Drum*, and *Ihme Ja Kumma*. Ms. Moir made me feel comfortable and she was very encouraging about Finnish pronunciation.

In the afternoon workshop we met the six fabulous Rajaton singers -- Essi the soprano, Virpi the 2nd soprano, Hannu the tenor, Ahtie the Baritone, Soila the Alto and Jussi the Bass. They sang for us, and then told us about themselves. I thought "Wow! These people have serious talent!" When we practised with Rajaton, they said our Finnish pronunciation was perfect! I felt honoured to be able to sing with such a professional group who came all the way from Finland! At the concert with Rajaton, it seemed like all the choirs were having a good time. Right after concert, Rajaton did a mini-concert for us. I loved it!

Sunday I especially enjoyed their encore and the autograph session. They were all pleasant to talk to and very nice. Later at the Finnish Embassy Brittany, Emily and Gabrielle took me around to all the members of Rajaton. We all got pictures taken with every singer and we all had fruit tarts! When I left, I thought "Wow! That was quite the experience!" Kiitos Rajaton!

Rajaton!



Katherine Fouzie and Soila Sariola



Emily Mai and Jussi Chydenius



Essi Wuorela and Gabrielle Brochu



Rajaton sings with the Ottawa Children's Choir at Dominion Chalmers Church



Brittany Dugan, Hannu Temperature and Emily Mai



Ahti Paunu and Gabrielle Brochu



Virpi Moskari and Emily Mai

Focus on Mentoring

by Jackie Hawley, Director-Chamber Choir

All three levels of the Ottawa Children's Choir are presented with unique and interesting opportunities throughout the choral season. Mentoring was a significant part of this year's focus for the Chamber Choir.

Chamber choristers mentored their parents at an open rehearsal. Parents were welcomed to attend a two-hour rehearsal on a Saturday afternoon in January in order to experience first-hand what goes on in a Chamber Choir rehearsal. Choristers shared their scores with their parents and modeled healthy vocal technique as their parents sang along. Choristers helped their parents to follow the traditional score of the *Lake Huron Song* and in contrast, the graphic score of the *Micmac Honour Song*. Many parents sent messages of gratitude for the opportunity to gain understanding into rehearsal process and procedure. Choristers remained focused and professional in a situation that was likely somewhat unconventional for their experience. Parents enjoyed themselves and learned a lot and that is largely due to the mature, supportive learning environment allowed by the choristers.

This year Chamber Choir participated in two educational outreach workshops for teachers. As consistently as in past workshops, choristers were supportive and encouraging to the teachers as they experimented with new repertoire and conducting techniques. Teachers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to conduct an experienced, responsive choir as this helped them to understand the effects of their conducting gestures. Participants also said that they found it inspiring to feel what it was like to conduct such an accomplished group of singers.

This year's educational outreach program extended to include the Kaleid on the Road Festival and Music Monday. To assist participating school choirs in preparing for these events, Chamber Choir did a school tour which included visits to four schools in one day. The Chamber Choir performed varied selections from their repertoire and then invited the schools choirs to join as one large choir to perform the Kaleid on the Road and/or Music Monday repertoire, depending on the needs of each school. It was admirable to see Chamber choristers coaching school choristers on such elements as posture, watching the conductor and poise. The less-experienced singers worked to emulate the professional performance of the Chamber Choristers. It was a positive learning experience for all involved.

Chamber Choir members were important mentors as well as performers in the Kaleid on the Road Festival. Chamber choristers had solid knowledge of the massed choir repertoire and therefore were able to mentor a partner from a school choir while maintaining excellence in their own singing. The school choristers had never participated in this type of event before and the demands of the day were beyond their experience. Chamber Choir members encouraged and supported the less-experienced singers. This not only assisted these singers in their learning but also contributed to an enjoyable, successful workshop day for clinician Jennifer Moir and artists-in-residence Rajaton.

Music Monday was yet another place where Chamber Choir members were called upon to be the example, not only in vocal performance but again in behaviour and poise. With 800 children in the reverberant City Hall rotunda, it took a lot of energy to keep the crowd settled and focused. Chamber Choir members were consistently professional and did not require any reminders to behave exceptionally. I could feel that each Chamber chorister was a teacher there to assist me in running the event. NAC organizers were impressed that we were able to maintain a sense of calm in this environment. The event was a resounding success and everyone involved was able to finish the day feeling proud and satisfied.

Chamber Choir has grown significantly this year in sight reading ability and confidence, in musicality, and in vocal performance. More importantly, each member has matured in character and personal strength. This has allowed us as a group to go out and share our artistic excellence while connecting with our community to empower more people with the joy of singing. It is very rewarding to be a part of this team of model citizens. I am grateful and proud to be the Director of the Ottawa Children's Chamber Choir.

It's been fun by Merle Haltrecht-Matte



One year, when I was a little girl, my family sent out greeting cards showing the family portrait. I sat on the piano bench holding an accordion. It was huge, and I never knew how to play it properly, but it made me feel "musical". When I was in Grade 3, I remember auditioning for the school choir, and got in! Everyone did! The girls wore red skirts for performances, in front of our parents. For measuring the length of the skirt, I had to kneel on the floor. We wore short white socks, black shoes, and a white blouse.

In high school, for five years, I played flute in the school band. We went on a band exchange to Hamilton.

Many years later, when I was teaching elementary school, I conducted various choirs. I directed musical operettas in my Grade 6 classes; I always used songs in my kindergarten classes to teach French vocabulary, rhythm, and much else. Music has always been in my blood, in some way.

In April 2008, I read an ad looking for a choir manager. I called Jackie Hawley and spoke with her. On the phone, she sounded very positive and upbeat about the Ottawa Children's Choir. She explained to me what was needed of a manager for the next two months. We met, we hit it off, and I stayed - for not only two months but for those two months and two more years! The two months ran into Unisong, and Unisong was fun and exciting, so I declared, "Of course I would be back in September."

That year went very well, it was fun, and culminated in a trip to Newfoundland with the Chamber Choir. How could I leave after such an exhilarating time with such enthusiastic kids?

But now it is time - time for me to leave the manager's chair to someone else. I have a new grandson and I need time to go and visit him in Toronto. I will come to your concerts and I will come back and visit. And I will certainly keep in touch with Jackie Hawley. I have totally enjoyed my stint as manager. I have happy memories, and I am proud to be able to say that I have been a small part of the OCC.

Good luck and happy singing to all choristers, to parents, and to choir fans.

Realizing how much we have learned by Adriaan Witol



I have been in the Ottawa Children's Choir for over four years. The path that has taken me from Viva Choir to Chamber Choir has been an important and meaningful one to me and all the friends I have made along the way. In this choir, one improves one's musical prowess in theory and vocal sound. The older choir performs in a number of diverse and thrilling places such as the NAC and Newfoundland. There are many chances for the choristers to demonstrate to their friends and family how they have improved and just how incredible their singing is.

Though I have seen several choristers come and go, I have also seen many of them continue their musical career in another way. Those who aspire to pursue a professional career in music benefit from the choir tremendously, especially as they realize how much they have learned.

We have many people who help keep the choir running by organizing and supervising behind the scenes, and we are blessed to be in the capable hands of these wonderful people.

The Ottawa Children's Choir is an experience that neither I nor any of my fellow choristers will soon forget. Even as we grow older and eventually have to leave, the choir will always be a memory looked upon with happiness by all of us who have moved on.

Knowledge, confidence, friendship by Adele Keyes



Picture yourself surrounded by voices, complex harmonies pieced together to form one glorious voice. Imagine the melodies, meaningful words of pride, sorrow or simply a sound produced by a perfectly shaped mouth. There's nothing quite like hearing it, while being part of the whole. Three years ago, when I nervously walked up the steps of McNabb, I hadn't a clue that I would experience anything like I just described. I hadn't anticipated the sense of accomplishment I would receive while performing in a -- dare I say -- unattractive plaid bib. I certainly could have never foreseen that I would gain so much in knowledge, confidence and friendship.

They have come through rehearsals. In two fast-paced hours we have sung our difficult pieces, vastly improving them while simultaneously learning proper singing technique. Every minute at rehearsal contributes to the magnificent sound that fills the halls during a performance.

Learning the music itself is a challenge. Learning the words in a foreign language is another intriguing one. With the choir I have sung in English, French, German, Finnish, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish and even some sign language. It's a little piece of insight into different cultures, an introduction to the heart of their languages.

Perhaps the main reason for my anticipation towards Wednesday afternoons comes from the people. Ms. Hawley's experienced approach is kind and productive. All the choristers and the management team cooperate to create an environment that is welcoming and truly enjoyable. The choir is skilled, unafraid to take on challenges and filled with joy and enthusiasm - which all in all makes for a grand success.

Choir is my life by Evy Kassirer



Wednesday is the favourite day of my week. Why? Going to Chamber Choir rehearsal is something I always look forward to. Choir for me isn't just one thing - It's the friends, it's the snacks, it's the music. Choir is the opportunity to mix my voice among others.

There are the upbeat and groovy songs such as *Rejoice and Sing*. There are the beautiful and touching songs such as 'Can You Hear Me?' and *Remembrance Day Child*. There are the cute and silly songs like *I Saw a Ship A-Sailing* and *When I Sing*. Each song is my favourite, awesome in its own way.

But choir isn't just the songs, the music, the snacks, and the friends.

Choir is the performances. Choir is slipping into a long red dress and dancing around feeling ever so elegant. Choir is cramming yourself with another hundred choristers onto the stage for a mass performance, barely able to breathe but still sounding awesome. Choir is going to Newfoundland for a choral festival and getting to know your fellow choristers until you're all best friends.

Choir is searching YouTube after you get a new song, so that you can download it onto your iPod and sing along. And then you're singing *Ode to Joy* in German at school, and your school friends are looking at you oddly because they'll never understand. They'll never understand how awesome it is to be a choir nerd.

One of the best experiences of my daughter's life, and mine

By Donna Bisson

The Ottawa Children's Choir: I did not even know it existed until two years ago. I saw Jackie Hawley on the 11:30 news one night and I was intrigued. My daughter Katie, who was 13 at the time, had been singing most of her life. She sings constantly. She sings for the pure joy that it brings her. She sings to relax and to praise God. Following that newscast I contacted the choir to arrange an audition.

Katie joined Concert Choir in September 2008 and is a member of Chamber Choir this year. To say that the experience has been pure ecstasy for her is an understatement. Her experience with Children's Choir the last two years is equalled only by her faith. The Children's Choir is as much a part of her as breathing. When she speaks of the choir, the directors, the accompanists, the managers, the other choristers and the music it is with veneration. Her entire body changes; she stands taller, her eyes glow and her smile broadens. The metamorphosis is due to the love and respect that both Allison and Jackie demonstrate, not just to her but to all the choristers. All her experiences with the choir affect her profoundly. The professionalism and commitment by Sally and Laura are a testament to the passion of the choir. The caring, concern and attention to detail shown to everyone by Wanda and Merle reinforce the vision of the choir.

The bond forged among the choristers is a unique relationship which upholds Katie. She tells stories of spontaneous outbursts of singing by the choristers while waiting for rehearsals or performances to begin or of shared interests and common experiences in other aspects of her life. The music inspires and stimulates her. It moves her emotionally, spiritually and it challenges her intellectually. The practices, rehearsals and performances are the highlights of her week. After a long day at school the two hours of practices on Wednesdays renew her rather than exhaust her. Later in the evening she approaches homework revitalized and encouraged. She feels bereft when a week goes by without a practice, as though her week, her life is incomplete. She misses the people, the challenge and the fun. The Ottawa Children's Choir is an essential part of Katie; it defines her and sustains her.

From a parent's perspective the Ottawa Children's Choir is a gift; an organization that can fulfill a child's heart's desire. To hear my child sing constantly, especially the music that she is learning with the choir, I know that she is where she belongs. To know that Wanda and Merle care for the personal needs of the choristers is to know that my child is in good hands. To witness Sally and Laura demonstrate professionalism as accompanists is to know my child is being mentored. To hear the funny and serious stories that Allison and Jackie tell the choristers tells me that she is loved. The tutoring, teaching, and cajoling that Allison and Jackie accomplish as well as the praise that they bestow add to Katie's overall growth. They are so much more than choir directors. They have cultivated and promoted musical and personal growth in Katie. They inspire confidence in her ability to sing and perform.

In my 22 years of being a parent I have never worked with such a well-run organization as this. One example of this that I am thankful for is all the emails about upcoming events and commitments. Of course I am reassured that many of the daily operations are adeptly administered to by Andi. Her behind the scenes leadership is greatly appreciated as is the involvement of the volunteers including the Board of Directors. I have confidence that the organization has the support it requires. Not only have the past two years been one of the best experiences of my daughter's life but of mine as well.

Embracing the moments

by Allison Prowse—Director, Viva and Concert Choirs



When I meet the eyes of the choristers, I am able to embrace my belief that the joy of singing is alive and well! I reflect upon what has been a busy and challenging year for the Concert and Viva Choirs. I am so very proud and happy for their efforts and successes...in rehearsals, their work at home, and in performances! These elements support the music education programme that is developed and provided for the children on a weekly basis. I *thoroughly* enjoy the opportunity that I have been given to teach and facilitate beautiful music created by children. Rehearsal time is precious in terms of getting to know the children and, in many cases, their families. The presence of many family members and friends increases an understanding of the depth of learning that the choristers are achieving. My experience has taught me that these connections enhance a spirit of community, and furthers the desire to create, and to become more, together.

There have been so many extraordinary opportunities for the Viva and Concert Choir choristers this year, and this season in particular! Singing at the National War Memorial in November and May, the National Arts Centre stage (3 occasions to do so for the Concert Choir this year...Christmas with NACO and Boris Brott, 40th Anniversary celebrations with NACO with the Family Adventure Series and Unisong), Community Outreach with Senior members of our city, and a continued connection with a congregation that supports our mandate of music education. The incredibly talented artists and musicians that we involve in our choral community to help broaden musical experiences are so valuable and giving...the Central Forces Band, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Kathy Armstrong and Baobab Youth Performers, conductors Boris Brott and Barbara Clark, clinician Jennifer Moir and the fun of singing with Rajaton, and conductors Gerald Fagan and Pinkus Zukerman with NACO for Unisong. What vast and enriching musical experiences...so many genres and languages. The Viva Choir has sung in 6 languages this year, the Concert Choir, 7!

And how wonderful that every time we bring our choristers out into the community, the response is the same. The words are positive, glowing and thankful ... the children's vocal abilities, musical responsiveness to other directors, their musicianship, their diction (nice to know what they are singing!) and their professional and exemplary behaviour are but a few of the things said about these children!

The Viva theory programme is now established (with more tweaking and growth in the future) and is showing immediate benefits during rehearsals. Its continued benefits are observed as well among those entering the Concert Choir with that previously-acquired base of musical knowledge. It displays itself in a greater breadth of understanding of notation, rhythm, dynamics, form and structure, and a quickened ability to read scores. The sight reading programme started in January with the Concert Choir (the same book is also used in the Chamber Choir) enhances these abilities. It appears to assist some choristers in the Concert Choir who have not had the benefit of rudiments in theory from the Viva Choir. At this point, I see extending the sight reading programme to include short theory moments for the Concert Choir next year to help weave together a diverse group of chorister abilities. It's truly amazing to me as a music educator to witness our children growing and transforming in such positive ways, all while sculpting beautiful music...and in an hour and 15 minutes once a week! How proud all parents can be of these exceptional children...keen and ready to learn and to become something even more that they could imagine! And how very proud these choristers can be of themselves!

My passion for three things in life is met within this profession...children, music and education. The ongoing process and evolution that I am met with in rehearsal each week entices me to embrace that which brings such joy all round! A message to each of us...let us all revel in the beautiful music that your children gift us with...in rehearsal, at home and in performance. These are savoured moments worth taking in...to tuck away, and then bring out again for a brightening of a rainy day!

Top ten reasons why parents should get involved with the Ottawa Children's Choir

by Angie Dugan and Wanda Manning Managers, Concert Choir



10. Omnipotence – in granting permission for bathroom trips.
9. You too can marvel at the multitude of injuries a chorister can sustain at rehearsals that require band aids.
8. You can implement your kindergarten math skills by numbering every paper handed out with the choristers corresponding binder number (1 to 65).
7. You can be amazed at how beautiful the choristers sound and yet still the director has five things that can be improved.
6. You can quickly realize that you hit the send button on the emails without proof reading . You will promptly have to answer six emails with the same question.
5. You become adept at soothing fragile fashion egos when tweenagers are faced with tartan vests and kilts.
4. Free Travel – relive your youth with a school bus ride.
3. NAC Backstage privileges – Hob Knobbing with Eugene Levy, Boris Brott and Pinkus Zuckerman.
2. You get to see that your child **is** normal.
1. The kids are AMAZING – they are worth our investment.

Ogre nowhere to be seen by Andi Murphy, General Manager

Your faces told a story as I sat and watched you participating in the Kaleid Festival - the story of singing in a choir. The giggles as you followed hand gestures and pinched your noses, the focus as you responded to musical interpretation, the exhaustion and satisfaction of a hard day's work and the pure joy of having a day off school.

A few Saturdays ago we continued that story. We held the first round of general auditions for next season. The children, most of them still eight years old, sat on the bench outside the Steinway Room anxiously awaiting their turns. They had no idea who or what was waiting for them behind the door. I think they might imagine a stern-faced ogre with beady eyes and pointy green horns holding a conductor's baton! Perhaps that's why I sometimes hear a sigh of relief when Ms. Hawley and Ms. Prowse greet them with big smiles and warm welcomes. The children usually leave the auditions laughing and telling their parents that it was a piece of cake!

Do you remember your first audition? For some of you it was just last year, for others it was four, five or even six years ago. But for you who love to sing, belonging to a choir will become a lifelong joy and passion. And you'll have many many auditions and sometimes, yes sometimes, you'll imagine that stern-faced ogre with beady eyes and green pointy horns holding a conductor's baton. But I can tell you with confidence that after 45 years of singing in choirs I've never come across one.

Congratulations on a wonderful year.

Moments to cherish by Angela Kokkinos

February was a very cool month, and I'm not talking about winter. I got the chance to sing at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the National Arts Centre with my daughter Melina who is in the Concert Choir. I was part of an "Alumni Choir" under the direction of the famous Barbara Clark. You see, I used to sing with the Ottawa Board of Education Central Choir (which is now the Ottawa Children's Choir). I never dreamed that one day I would have the honour and pleasure of singing with one of my children in such a special concert.

Melina and I would practise our songs and even Marianna, my youngest daughter, in Viva, ended up singing along with us in the house. There were so many awesome moments, but here were a few that I thought were special.

- Eugene Levy was the host and we were all a little star struck (I remember him from Second City TV, but the kids all remember him from the movie Cheaper By the Dozen 2)
- We were all honoured to learn Louis Applebaum's *Song for the National Arts Centre* which was written for the inaugural digging of the NAC building site in the presence of Queen Elizabeth II. The piece had never been performed since and was extremely difficult but rewarding to sing. Boris Brott was such a pro and really made the performance fun.
- Performing the Gahu was amazing but let's just say that I'll stick to singing and leave the dancing to others.
- My favourite part of the concert though was singing *Song for Canada* with the massed choir. I remember singing this song as a child and got goosebumps when singing it on the NAC stage. My daughter Melina just happened to be singing right in front of me, and it brought tears to my eyes. This was one of those moments that I will cherish forever.



Eugene Levy and Boris Brott celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the National Arts Centre with the massed Ottawa Children's Choir and Alumni Choir

The massed choir on stage at the National Arts Centre



Enriching for child and parent by Linda Fouzie

As a parent, you appreciate experiences which broaden your child's horizons. Being a member of the Ottawa Children's Choir has done just that for Katherine.

I remember her audition day as she nervously walked the long corridor and was escorted to the awaiting choir leaders. At the time, we hadn't met Allison Prowse and Jackie Hawley; had I known then what I know now, I wouldn't have been nervous at all for my daughter. Katherine emerged from the 15-minute group session with a big smile and exciting news that she truly enjoyed the whole process. Even had she not become an OCC chorister, she had gained greater self-confidence through the supportive audition experience.

Watching the choristers at their weekly practices is a treat! To hear their young voices develop and to watch Ms. Prowse's professionalism delivered with such grace, humour and loving respect for our children, is a parent's dream! Her expectations of artistic excellence are high but are always met under her caring, yet firm, guiding hand. Thank you, Ms. Prowse! Thank you, Sally!

The VIVA choir is also fortunate to have Ms. Baggle and her terrific e-mails, ensuring that we are always well informed on all accounts. Thank you for your wit and wisdom as you keep our children on task (especially with their theory lessons).

As for public concerts so far this first year: Viva's first Christmas performances at Dominion Chalmers and also at the retirement residence, were both memorable and magical. The evening concert with Rajaton and the massed choir was an incredible experience for the young choristers (Thank you, Mrs. Hawley!). And the Commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic at the Cenotaph was impressive. How joyous to spend those precious moments watching your child as part of a greater whole, creating beautiful gifts of song.

There is so much more to say about the Ottawa Children's Choir and its dedicated leaders, but in essence, what an overall enriching experience for both child and parent...a true blessing.



Rehearsing at the *Kaleid on the Road* Choral Festival

Happy Memories

by Kay Baggley, Manager Viva Choir



For the past 22 years I have had the privilege and pleasure to be a volunteer with the Ottawa Children's Choir, formerly the Central Choir of the Ottawa Board of Education.

My roles varied from vocal assistant for the Concert and Chamber Choirs for several years, a onetime fund raising co-ordinator, (this was before there was a Board of Directors), and a many-times chaperone for various trips which included, Kingston, Toronto, and the most exciting of all, a trip to New York City, where the Chamber Choir had the honour to sing at The Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

As much as I enjoyed volunteering, I vowed that I would never be a manager, so here I am. I couldn't say no, when Ms. Prowse became the director of Viva, and asked if I would co-manage with Yvonne Navratil, the first conductor of Viva. Ms. Navratil and I muddled along, and picked up speed once we had the computer stuff figured out. For the past four years, I've been flying solo on the job, and now, when I think that I have things sorted out, it is time for me to go. It has been a joy to work with the eager Viva choristers, and their ever so patient and helpful parents. I will remember with fondness my time spent with the children. It is amazing to see the transformation of this group of sometimes timid and uncertain individuals, as they evolve into the confident singers that make Viva the little gem of a choir that it is. To see so many former Viva choristers continue in Concert and Chamber Choirs, is truly rewarding. It is this building on a firm foundation, along with the dedication of loyal and committed choristers, patient and co-operative parents, and of course the wonderfully talented directors, that results in excellence, and that is a word that I have always associated with OCC.

Being a part of this fine organization has been an honour for me, and I will miss that association very much.



Abby Manning and Joseph Nanda lay a wreath on behalf of the choir.

The Ottawa Children's Choir singing at
The Battle of the Atlantic Ceremony on Sunday May 2, 2010.



Mon aventure musicale: Faire partie d'une chorale

by Jessica Djungu-Sungu

Cette année, j'ai connue une grande expérience en me joignant à la chorale pour enfants d'Ottawa. J'ai beaucoup apprécié d'être une choriste parce que j'ai appris beaucoup des nouvelles chansons et des techniques pratiques d'une chorale. La partie la plus intéressante d'y faire partie est le fait de chanter tout en s'assurant d'entendre les autres et également cela m'a permis de chanter avec beaucoup de passion.

Par ailleurs, j'ai fait la connaissance de plusieurs personnes et en étant dans une chorale vous partagez tous l'un des plus beaux rêves de votre vie qui est celui de chanter.

J'aime chanter, j'aime faire partie de la chorale et je ne vais jamais cesser de chanter. C'est une façon pour moi de m'exprimer.



Recommendation: Join!

by Marianna Kokkinos



Choir has been such a fun experience for me! My sister Melina sings in the Concert Choir and that's what inspired me to join the Viva.

Since I know piano, it helps a lot to read the notes. My favourite part is performing because we get to share all the hard work we've done with everyone. It's been fun to sing in different languages like in the *Mi'kmaq Honour Song* and in Finnish.

Allison has taught us a lot and she is a really good director (and she's funny). I would recommend that other kids join the choir. I'm sure they would have as much fun as me!

Don't outsing your neighbours!

by Anna Khoroshilov



Singing in a choir is a group activity. It involves teamwork. To keep your voice in shape you must make a commitment to attend rehearsals regularly. You need to do various vocal warm-ups before rehearsals; drink plenty of water; sit next to a singer whose voice does not make you feel tired. Don't try to out-sing your neighbours, it is not nice! Practise your songs between rehearsals. Never ever take your eyes off the conductor! You should work at home too. Singing in the shower and while doing homework works for me. You have to sing with good posture, so sit erect from hips up. Constantly check that your shoulders and neck are relaxed. Don't overdo it! There are some other things you should know if you want to become a great chorister. These are kept secret by the conductor and other real choristers. Join Viva and you'll become a part of our circle of friends!

And the food!

by Maggie Roberts

My experience in the Viva choir has been awesome, starting with the frightening day of auditions to the honour of singing at the Battle of the Atlantic ceremony. The things I love about choir are the cool places we get to sing, like Dominion Chalmers.. You can also meet a lot of friends from your own choir or from other local choirs that sing with us. Don't forget the most important thing with choir ... FOOD! Yes, the delicious, mouth-watering, scrumptious food. Singing takes a lot of energy and you can't sing very well on an empty stomach. We got many kinds of food over the year: we ate fruit and pastries at the Battle of the Atlantic because we didn't have much breakfast. We have pizza parties, and pot lucks at the end of concerts.



There are also some challenges with choir -- the long rehearsals, the waits in concerts as other groups sing, the bright spotlights, and the memorizing of lyrics. But if you compare, there are far more good things than bad. And with a little imagination, even the bad things can be turned around to be good!

How I feel about viva choir!

by Emily Gordon

My name is Emily Gordon and I'm in the Viva choir! Mrs. Prowse is our conductor. She is really nice! Mrs. Prowse teaches us about sharps, flats, octaves and all sorts of cool things in music! After a fun time of just singing out, I feel as happy as the brightest, sunniest day and I can't wait for the next choir practice!

One of my favourite songs is 'Beat of a Different Drum'. I like this song because it is such a beautiful one. When I grow up I want to be a teacher or have a choir of my own. Bye!



My choir experience

by Maeve Sarazin

I have really enjoyed my time in the Viva choir.

I love to learn new songs and present them in performances. Choir has taught me to have better control of my voice and my breathing. I also learned how to expand my vocal range. I made lots of new friends throughout my choir experience.

Ms. Prowse is a very good conductor and she is nice and fun. If you know anyone who can sing get them to audition. They will thank you for it.



I love the choir

by Olivia Guerra

To be in choir is so much fun!

The concerts you get to go to are the best because you can sing in front of hundreds of people.

I love the choir!



Thursday is my favourite day of the week!

by Maia Gronau



Thursdays are definitely my favourite day of the week. Every Thursday after school I go to Viva choir practice. Even if I'm tired after the school day, as soon as we start the warm-ups I don't feel tired any more.

I've learned such a lot about music and singing since we started in September. And I've learned some lovely songs and some fun songs. My favourite four songs are "The Beat of a Different Drum", "Song of the River", "The Rainbow" and "Song for Canada".

Every concert has been an excellent experience and I shall always remember them, especially the workshop and concert with Rajaton!

Being in the Viva choir this year has been an extraordinary experience and seriously one of the most important parts of my life. I know choral singing will continue to be my favourite hobby.

Upcoming events...

Fri. May 28th	Year end banquet
June 1 & 3	Reauditions
Wed. June 2nd	Annual General Meeting
July 1st	Unisong (Chamber and Concert Choir)

Check the web site for the most up to date schedule information

www.ottawachildrenschoir.ca

**Have a great summer and
hope to see you next year!**



Thanks to the Newsletter Team

Dennis Orchard, Editor
Angela Kokkinos, Layout
David Miller, Web Edition

Thanks to all the contributors for your articles and photos.