



BARBARA BERNER
Artistic Director

Choir Notes

THIRTY-FIRST SEASON

Fall 2008

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Lively season: Thirty-one!

WELCOME! THE ST. LOUIS CHILDREN'S CHOIRS invites you and your family to an exciting 31st season of artistic discovery and world-class performances. At the start of the season over twenty concerts are already on the calendar, an impressive list of events. 500 talented young singers (ages 6 to 18) bring their artistry and choral expression of classical, sacred, contemporary, and world music to the stage for everyone to enjoy.

Concert Choir will again perform spectacular works of art with the professional musicians of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. Concerts include Howard Shore's *The Lord of the Rings* Symphony, John Adam's *El Niño* with Maestro David Robertson, and the orchestra's season finale: Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*. Choristers join Concert Choir and the orchestra for a series of "Holiday Celebration" Concerts for a tenth year of musical merriment.

All six Children's Choirs levels are featured on a very special Holiday Concert in December, extraordinary Spring Concerts in May, a variety of school tours, plus four free Family & Friends Concerts in October, February, and March.

World music is the focus in February when Concert Choir will perform at the Festival of African & African-American Music, including a joint performance with a youth choir from Ghana. In October, The



Scottish Partnership for Arts and Education invited the Choirs for two Scottish folk music workshops.

This season, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has awarded the Children's Choirs a third "CAREC" initiative award—Challenge America: Reaching Every Community. The NEA's grant will support advanced music literacy instruction and a residency by guest clinician Dr. Elena Sharkova who will encourage the young singers to explore and enjoy the beauty of Russian choral music. Dr. Sharkova is a native of St. Petersburg, Russia and graduate of the St. Petersburg State Rimski-Korsakov Conservatory. She is now the Artistic Director of the Cantabile Choral Guild Youth Singers, and the Music Director of the Symphony Silicon Valley Chorale in California. Dr. Sharkova will conduct five stirring Russian pieces at the Family & Friends Concerts in the spring.

Cultural exchanges through national and international touring have long been an important part of the Children's Choirs program. Plans are underway for meaningful song sharings with a variety of choral groups and adventures on tour, including Chorister's Sing-A-Mile-High tour to Colorado in June. Stay tuned for more about this season's musical journeys.

Artistic Director Barbara Berner invites you to experience the joy of hearing young voices in heartfelt song as The St. Louis Children's Choirs greets its fourth decade of musical excellence and quality performances.



With your help, last season's
Annual Campaign goal was met.
The benefits multiply each year.
Thank you for your generosity!

Thirty years of friendship and song

Last season marked an exceptional 30th anniversary of the Children's Choirs. A collective 38,000 listeners, the largest seasonal audience ever, heard these young singers in various performances at Powell Symphony Hall, the Sheldon Concert Hall, Washington University's 560 Music Center, on school tours, and in Australia—not counting radio, television, or Internet listeners.

The Anniversary Gala Concert in May 2008 included guests of honor Governor Matt Blunt and First Lady Melanie Blunt who presented The St. Louis Children's Choirs with a state proclamation for excellence in the arts. The Governor recognized the commitment the Choirs has made to serve and enrich the lives of Missourians and the lasting impact made on thousands of Choir members who have benefited from this experience over the years.

2,100 listeners attended the season finale where all of the ensembles performed with 80 gifted alumni, plus instrumentalists from the Ariana String Quartet, St. Louis African Chorus, and the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO). Featured guest artists included SLSO Concertmaster David Halen, soprano Miran Halen, and KMOV-TV news anchor Vickie Newton. 32 graduating Choir members announced their plans to study music and other academic disciplines at an impressive list of colleges and universities.

In April 2008, Concert Choir was joined by David and Miran Halen and by the Symphony's Principal Flutist Mark Sparks, to host the Children's Choirs first Benefit Concert. The concert introduced new



Burana. The excellence demonstrated by the young artists gained the praise of guest conductor Peter Oundjian, Music Director of the Toronto Symphony:

“It has been a great pleasure for me to work with the wonderful singers of The St. Louis Children's Choirs in Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*...The singers sing absolutely beautifully and contributed enormously to the musical success of our performances. Congratulations to you, [Artistic Director] Barbara, on all

friends from the St. Louis and greater Missouri arts community to the Choirs and helped form lasting relationships.

During the 30th anniversary season, the Children's Choirs were featured in multiple concerts with the Saint Louis Symphony. Concert Choir and Choristers joined the Symphony for a series of Classic Christmas concerts. Four soloists from the Children's Choirs were featured in Henri Dutilleux's *The Shadows of Time* and Concert Choir performed in the Symphony Orchestra's season finale, *Carmina*

the great work that you are doing to encourage these young singers to participate so enthusiastically and generously in the musical experience.”

Likewise, composer-conductor Mandy Miller of Scotland who joined the Children's Choirs for a 10-day residency at the beginning of the 2007-08 season, said: “It has been a profoundly moving experience to work with such a wide range of children with such passion and commitment for the art of their own music making. St. Louis should be extremely proud of these young artists and the



Being a part of The St. Louis Children's Choirs has been an amazing experience for our daughter. Not only has she learned to make beautiful music, she has learned lifelong lessons about being a responsible and thoughtful person. She has also made great friends by being a part of this wonderful and very special organization.

—Nancy Mohr

outstanding professional staff of The St. Louis Children's Choirs."

Each ensemble in the Choirs premiered at least one new commissioned work for young voices by composers from Scotland, England, British Columbia, Florida, Virginia, Arkansas, and Illinois. Many of the composers traveled to St. Louis to meet the Choir members. They answered questions about composing music and conducted students in workshops before each premiere. With active encouragement from the Children's Choirs and with thanks to our commissioned works sponsors, the composers' publishers are now preparing these choral works for worldwide distribution.

The 30th anniversary season concluded with an amazing two-week international tour to Australia that enabled 43 young artists in Concert Choir to share their music with acclaimed children's choirs in Australia, to experience the excitement of a new culture and continent, to represent St. Louis to foreign audiences, and to become more informed citizens of the world.

The Children's Choirs is very grateful to the students, alumni, parents, friends, donors, and staff who took part in this outstanding 30th anniversary season, and for the thousands of Choir members who laid the foundation for these achievements.

It was a joy to celebrate 30 years of friendship and song with you!

VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS!

Share your skills and meet new friends during rehearsal times or performances, behind the scenes or in the office, with audience members or with mailings and wardrobe. Each activity is important.

June 2008:

Australia tour "down under"

"Good-on-ya!" There was a lot of good all around as Concert Choir members shared their love of music in public concerts with marvelous Australian children's choirs in Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne; plus song sharings at a children's hospital and at a senior residence. A workshop with celebrated Australian composer Stephen Leek and a musical visit to a high school in Bairnsdale taught these young singers more about authentic Aboriginal melodies and sounds.

The Australian adventure included friendly kangaroos, native birds, photo-ready koalas, the famous Sydney Opera House, and a wet ferry ride across the harbor in Sydney; followed later in the tour by a coastline trip to Melbourne through rolling hills dotted with sheep farms, scenic mountain ranges, and wide ocean beaches. Unforgettable home-stays in Bairnsdale with some of the most kindhearted families made Choir members feel like they were visiting their grandparents.

In Sydney, a joint concert with the Sydney Children's Choir was recorded for the "Rising Stars" radio program on Australia's Classic FM. This station broadcasts all over Australia and on the Internet. In joint concerts with the Brisbane Birralee Voices and the Young Voices of Melbourne, Concert Choir members performed with their new friends singing *Banks Of Doon* and Stephen Leek's *Myoon-myoon* and *Goolay-Yali*. Everyone was so welcoming and loved hearing our young artists sing!

The concert at St. John's Anglican Church in rural Bairnsdale was probably the most unique. It was held in an old brick church and every single seat was filled!

An email home to parents during the tour described the event:

“As the concert began, we could all feel how intently the audience was listening. The acoustics were excellent and our young singers sang a perfect performance. We closed the concert with *African Celebration* and then sang an encore of *American Anthem*. Before the encore, we announced that the last song was dedicated in gratitude for the close relationship that exists between Australia and the United States from serving together in the Pacific during WWII, the Korean War and Vietnam. Some in the audience were older and remembered those war years. Choir chaperones said they saw several men and women in the audience who had tears running down their faces as we sang *American Anthem* which includes *America the Beautiful* and the *Star-Spangled Banner*.

All could feel the love that was flowing back and forth between the audience and our young sing-



Performance at St. John's Anglican Church, Bairnsdale

ers. An enthusiastic standing ovation closed the concert. There was the sweetest sense that this had been a momentous occasion for the audience. One woman who is a retired elementary music teacher said she had been to international music conferences and never heard anything like the sound of Concert Choir; they had perfect intonation, beautiful diction, a flawless performance—but most of all an exceptional tone quality and grace.”

Throughout the tour, it was exciting to see how each performance showed a deeper understanding of the repertoire. Concert Choir's artistry, teamwork, and mastery of the music really developed. The heartfelt response of the Australian audiences was proof that “music made together may one day heal mankind.”

Thank you to all parents, donors, and chaperones for making this trip possible. The music making and educational aspects of this tour were everything you could have imagined . . . and more.



Choir members en route along the Australian coastline

A graduate speaks

The day Nick Rubin auditioned was a memorable one for Artistic Director Barbara Berner. Nick was a shy red-headed seven-year old. His grandfather brought him to the audition and in a wonderful Russian accent he asked if Nick could sing two songs. The grandpa had his accordion along and as he started

playing the little boy sang a beautiful folk song in Russian followed by America the Beautiful; each was sung flawlessly from memory. By the time Nick was in 6th grade, he was singing in Concert Choir. At the 30th Anniversary Gala Concert, Nick Rubin graduated. Here's his story:

Hello, my name is Nick Rubin. I've been with The St. Louis Children's Choirs for 10 years. I started in the Children's Choir level, moved on to Chorale, Choristers, then Concert Choir, and am ending my last year in Chamber Singers. In fifth grade, I sang the "Snowman" duet with Choir member Diana Sussman on stage at Powell Symphony Hall, accompanied by the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. The Children's Choirs have had a profound influence on my life; I think more so than school or any of my other extra-curricular activities.

Beyond the musical and performance skills I have learned in the Choirs, which were many; the Choirs opened my eyes to the world. I have had the opportunity to travel to and perform in Carnegie Hall, at the Oregon Bach Festival, and in Vienna, Salzburg, Prague, London, and Wales. Choir



tours opened the way for many new cultural experiences—from performing with a world-class orchestra in Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral, to trying wiener schnitzel for the first time in that city (I don't remember whether I liked it or not).

What I do remember most about our trips is the universal ability of music to communicate across cultures. In the city of Litomysl in the Czech Republic, we sang in a small community hall filled to the brim with people who didn't

speak a word of English. At the end of the concert, however, they had tears in their eyes and yelled "Encore, encore!" That was probably the best part of the trip—connecting with people through song. They didn't speak English, and I certainly didn't speak any Czech, but everyone felt and understood the power of music.

In the fall, I will be majoring in Political Science and Economics at Washington University. Although these majors are seemingly unrelated to music, I was drawn to these majors as a result of my experiences in the Children's Choirs. The universal communication and understanding so easily achieved by music is something politics in the world can aspire to. I will continue singing throughout my life, and will never forget what the Children's Choirs has given me.

Thank you.

SLCC Alumni! Let's stay in touch! Please send us your email address to: info@slccsing.org

Alumni Parents Please call or email your SLCC alum's address. We appreciate your help!

Welcoming new ensemble directors

Yvonne Crockett

We are pleased and grateful to announce that the Choristers tradition of excellence will continue in the hands of another outstanding director. Mrs. Yvonne Crockett is currently the department chair at Central Visual and Performing Arts High School in St. Louis. She holds a joint Bachelor's degree from the St. Louis Institute of Music and Washington University and is completing a master of music education degree at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. Choirs under Mrs. Crockett's direction have consistently received Division I ratings at district festivals and have performed twice at the White House.

Yvonne Crockett has a broad background that includes singing on Broadway, a love for singing opera, and professional work as an organist, pianist, and voice teacher. She is a wonderful colleague who is known for her lively sense of humor and an incredible teacher who believes in the power of music to change young lives.

Belinda Burnworth

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Mrs. Belinda Burnworth as the director of the Children's Choir 1A ensemble. Mrs. Burnworth is a woman of many talents and holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree with honors from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and a law degree from Saint Louis University. After working as an attorney for a number of years, Mrs. Burnworth found she really missed teaching and returned to the field of music education. She teaches kindergarten through 8th grade music in her hometown of Belleville, Illinois.

Mrs. Burnworth is deeply dedicated to the mission of The St. Louis Children's Choirs. She has been a music reading teacher for Choristers and Concert Choir for ten years and served on the Choir's Board of Directors from 2000 to 2008. With a warm smile, a gentle sense of humor, and high expectations for excellence, she inspires children to sing from their hearts.

ALYCIA DAVIS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Alycia Davis Scholarship Fund raised just over \$10,500 last season. With much gratitude, this gifted musician and teacher is honored by you. Through continued giving this season, many young singers from across St. Louis will benefit from the crucial financial help of tuition scholarships. Thank you!



... YOU ...



MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

Thank you in advance for your support of this year's Annual Giving Campaign. Your gift, large or small, makes a big difference!

Remember: Your employer may be able to double your gift through a matching gift program.

For more information, call the Choir Office at
314-993-9626, ext. 105

Concert Calendar 2008-09

31st Season

Please join us!

Sept. 19-20, 2008	<i>The Lord of the Rings</i> Symphony with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra	Powell Symphony Hall	7:30 p.m.
Oct. 25, 2008 Oct. 26, 2008	Family & Friends Concerts All Choir ensembles	Washington University 560 Music Center (Trinity Ave.) St. Louis, MO 63130	7:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.
Dec. 6, 2008	Holiday Concert All Choir ensembles	Powell Symphony Hall	2:00 p.m.
Dec. 13, 2008 Dec. 14, 2008	John Adams: <i>El Niño</i> with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra	Powell Symphony Hall	8:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.
Dec. 19-21, 2008	"Holiday Celebration" Concerts with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra	Powell Symphony Hall	various
Feb. 14-15, 2009	African & African American Music Festival	various	various
Feb. 28, 2009 March 1, 2009	Family & Friends Concerts All Choir ensembles	Purser Center, Logan Campus 1851 Schoettler Road Chesterfield, MO 63017	7:00 p.m. 3:00 p.m.
March 16, 2009	Cornell Women's Chorus Song Sharing	Parkway United Church 2841 Ballas Road St. Louis, MO 63131	TBD
April 17-18, 2009	Berlioz: <i>Damnation of Faust</i> with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra	Powell Symphony Hall	8:00 p.m.
May 9, 2009	Spring Concerts All Choir ensembles	Washington University 560 Music Center (Trinity Ave.) St. Louis, MO 63130	2:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.

Check: www.slccsing.org or call 314-993-9626 for updates and directions to concert venues

The St. Louis Children's Choirs is grateful for the generous support of:



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Des Lee Collaborative Vision



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