



Peter Robb
Artistic Director

In just a few days, the 10th season of Oregon Festival Choirs begins. If that sounds familiar, it's because we celebrated the 10th anniversary of the annual Pacific International Children's Choir Festival in 2007. It was after the second year of PICCFEST that our local boychoir and girlchoir programs began.

Beginning Year Ten

From the first public performance with OFAM in 1999 to our most recent performance of Bach's St. Matthew Passion with Helmuth Rilling and the Oregon Bach Festival orchestra and chorus, local young people have had the opportunity to work with outstanding musicians and conductors from around the world by singing in Oregon Festival Choirs.

Our choristers have performed for a combined audience of more than 50,000 people, and served our community in free performances for area senior centers, and as peer mentors in 30 concerts at local schools. Additionally, the Choirs have served schools and audiences in other communities during tours throughout

A DECADE OF GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Oregon and to San Francisco, Seattle, Boise, Philadelphia, Vancouver B.C., Victoria B.C. and in Canterbury and London, England.

During that time we have also watched local schools struggle to fund basic music education. Choral music has become increasingly rare in elementary schools and cut even at many middle schools, putting

We have found ways to support elementary and middle school music teachers

pressure on high schools programs to introduce, train and build a choral culture beginning in 9th grade. In response, we have found ways to support elementary and middle school music teachers with our choral music residencies which are the only exposure to choral music many students have until reaching high school. And it means Oregon Festival Choirs is the only place that many students have an ongoing choral experience.

The result is that our choristers come from every demographic group of our community. Far from being an elitist program, the Choir is a model for how our community can be a place where everyone is welcome and afforded the same honor and dignity.

This was articulated by the choristers themselves this past summer as the touring choirs worked hard to prepare for PICCFEST and the St. Matthew Passion. It was a grueling process at

times, but the harder they worked, the closer they grew.

On the final day, before taking the stage in Silva Hall, we asked them what they thought about the experience. Over and over, the themes of friendship, hard work, and pride were repeated: "I never imagined I would become so close to people so different from me." "I was pretty overwhelmed at first, but now I feel like I belong." "This was HARD WORK!" "But it's worth it. We've grown so much." "Can you believe how many amazing experiences we've had together?" For one chorister who is rarely at a loss for words, the only response was: "Awesome!"

Small But Powerful Reminders

These are small but powerful reminders that our work really does change young lives. They should encourage us in this tenth season to redouble our efforts, refine and improve our programs and capitalize on ways that our partnerships with local schools multiply the number of students who sing in a choir. And down the road, when we look back on the first decade of Oregon Festival Choirs, it will be said that it was these efforts that helped create a singing community.

As always, thank you to our supporters and chorister's parents, who help make this work possible.

Choristers' Birthdays

Chorister Profiles



September

Anthony Carter
 Milada Butler
 Sidney Clabaugh
 Andrew Kelso
 Morgan Doyscher
 Ariana Carter
 Aubrie Bush

October

Megan Waguespack
 Nate Jensen
 Tristan Sand
 Cloe Rice
 Jordan Claybaugh

November

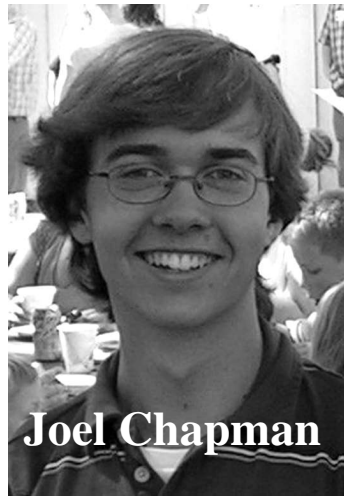
Charlotte Coons
 Joel Chapman
 Amber Phillips
 Anneleissa Coen
 Briana Rodriguez
 Emily Ann Renken
 Samantha Sibbald
 Nick Knight Meigs

OFC's Wish List

Office supplies – all kinds!
 Digital camera
 LED Projector

If you can help with any of these items please call the OFC office at 465-9600.

Joel Chapman is 16 years old and is a high school Junior this year. He has one sister, Kyla, who is 20. Joel's hobbies include reading, photography, art, drama, piano, and, of course, singing. He got into OFC when he heard about a new



Joel Chapman

a cappella group (Exit 194) that was starting up in late 2006, and has been singing with us ever since. Joel's favorite song from last season was "I Have Had Singing." And, one of Joel's many cool talents is his knack for arranging a cappella songs. He has arranged 10 songs so far, including a few for Exit 194 and Aria. The ideas come to him when he is listening to music, and he begins to form some arrangements in his head for the song he's hearing. He then goes to his computer and arranges the song in chunks, using a music composing program. As he's arranging, Joel sings parts of the song to himself so he can hear how it sounds out loud. Once he's done, he sometimes records the song with Mr. Robb's help, so the group can get an idea of the sound he likes. Then Joel prints out the scores, and voila! A work of art is made! He is seriously pretty good, but claims he's only had four really good songs. The rest of us know the real truth.

Anneleissa Coen begins seventh grade this fall. She kept very busy over the summer, attending one camp after another throughout the course of the three months. She likes math and band, and plays the trumpet with her school band. Anneleissa also participates in many extra-curricular sports, including football, basketball, soccer, and softball. She has been with Oregon Festival Choirs for two years. Her favorite pieces from last season were those by Bob Chilcott and "I Dream a World." Anneleissa hopes to teach music someday, and be qualified to teach a variety of subjects.



Anneleissa Coen

This year Oregon Festival Choirs is ten years old. At this milestone there is a growing number of former choristers heading off to their various post-high school pursuits. Beginning with this issue, we turn a Spotlight on OFC Alumni.



Lewis Gilmore, an OFC chorister from 1999-2004, is now a sophomore at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he is a clarinet performance major. He was home in May for a few weeks and volunteered at the OFC office before heading off to the renowned Chautauqua Music Festival for the summer.

Lewis began singing in Fiero as a fifth grader in 1999. During his second year in the Choir he began playing clarinet at Spencer Butte Middle School. By 8th grade he was admitted to the Arts Umbrella Junior Orchestra and moved into the Eugene Youth

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Onward . . .



Bob Rutledge
President, OFC Board

Looking back at old computer files I was surprised to learn that I've been an OFC volunteer for more than 2 years. Somebody must have been keeping track, because I was recently elected not

just to the Board of Directors but to take Becky Robb Hick's place as President of the OFC Board.

No...not, "take her place," since Becky has been instrumental in shaping OFC into the strong organization it has become. I was elected to *relieve her* of a share of her responsibilities. She will continue as a Board member (for, "life," according to Peter), and will serve the current term as Board Secretary.

Most OFC supporters and families don't know me. Peter and others at OFC can tell you it's not because I'm a demur guy (I was once refused service at Sweetwaters because the waitress thought I had, "scary hair"), but because I've worked on solitary chores.

I grew up in Texas, attended college in Portland and my career began as a social worker—a short-lived profession, while my bride and I lived in Bloomington, Indiana. After that I became a writer, then the communications director and press secretary for a member of Congress. Later I managed political campaigns and produced media for candidates until becoming a producer and editor for electronic and print media. I was also a part-time farm manager, as part owner of three farms in Texas.

How does any of that relate to OFC?

As a first grader I was introduced to music as an important part of the school curriculum. To this day I can sing all

the verses of *Texas Our Texas* (but I promise I won't). As a fifth grader I had the opportunity at school to learn to play the violin and in seventh grade began singing in choirs. When my family moved to Oregon those musical experiences continued until I graduated from high school.

I can say without hesitation that consistent participation in music ensembles as a student laid the foundation for many of the skills I have drawn on throughout my life.

Young people don't have those same opportunities any more, which is why you, as supporters and families of OFC choristers deserve more than accolades. You deserve medals for ensuring a continuum of musical experiences for young people.

Lewis Gilmore *Continued from Page 2*

Symphony as a freshman, where his steady progress eventually landed him the principal clarinet position.

As a chorister, he grew with the choir, sharing in many of OFC's firsts: first tours to British Columbia, San Francisco, and England; first OFC ensemble to attend PICCFEST; and first high school member of the boychoir during his final season as a chorister.

Lewis' growing musicianship was matched by the development of leadership skills, which he drew on as a member of the first class of high school choristers to serve on the PICCFEST summer staff.

When asked about the benefit of his OFC experience, Lewis replied, "Singing is definitely a valuable part of my music-making and I'm fortunate that I had those years in OFC to build that skill. We do a lot of singing in music theory class. And it helps my musicianship as a clarinetist to actually be the instrument when singing."

Lewis identified some of his most memorable moments as an OFC chorister

As President of OFC's Board my goal is to build on the progress that Becky, Peter and others have already achieved. We will beef up fund raising efforts to further strengthen the organization. We will review and work with staff to adjust job assignments so that the music, teaching and administrative staff can operate more efficiently. And, God willing, we will increase the public profile of Oregon Festival Choirs, always in pursuit of the organization's overarching goal to, "Create a Singing Community."

Thank you for your ongoing support, and please don't be surprised when we contact you in the future for even more support. Without you, none of it can happen.

by saying, "There are so many good ones. Like the tour stop in Redding, California - after singing in a church service in which we had performed at a new level. We were so excited that we went back into the sanctuary after eating our sack lunches and sang for half an hour, just to enjoy the sound we had finally discovered how to make... Most of all, whenever we had one of those really good rehearsals, there was a genuine happiness at how well it was going."

Given the chance to describe his dream career, Lewis hopes it includes playing in a major symphony, teaching in a university, and having the chance to give back through the student outreach programs that are an increasing part of a performance career.

Congratulations to Lewis on his outstanding years of singing and leadership with OFC. We send our best wishes as he continues to prepare for reaching that dream career. Wherever it leads, it is great to know that OFC has been an important part of the journey.

TWO GREAT MOMENTS FROM THE '08 SEASON



Brunch at PICCFEST was an exciting success, introducing many new people to OFC Programs.



The combined 325 voice PICCFEST Chorus delivered a stirring performance in the Festival Area at the Olympic Trials.

OFC Administrative and Music Team

Peter Robb	Founder/Artistic Director
Matthew Svoboda	Operations Director/Choir Director
Heather Stein	Director Training Choir Division/Recruitment
Camilla Carter	Principal Accompanist
Caitlin Sugishita	Accompanist
Connie Burden	Development Coordinator
Jennifer D’Fonseca	Enrollment & Financial Coordinator
Sherri Phillips	Volunteer Coordinator
Leslie Renken	Wardrobe Coordinator
JoVone Kettwig	Music Librarian

OREGON *festival* CHOIRS

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