



VOICEMAIL

November 2015

Diamond Jubilee Celebration

The 60th season of the Chamber Chorus began with a flourish the weekend of September 25-27. On Friday night a celebratory event for the Diamond Jubilee was held in the Mitchell Room at Holy Communion Episcopal Church hosted by SLCC Board Members and Music Director **Mary Chapman**. This was a unique occasion offered as a subscriber benefit and those who attended had a chance to meet the singers and many board members, as well as the honored guest for the evening.

Attending the event with her husband Matt was SLCC's newest **Composer-in-Residence Melissa Dunphy**. Melissa was born in Australia to Greek and Chinese parents, but is now married to an American and living in Philadelphia. Her talents are boundless and she is just as likely to be found in a theatrical performance as she is displaying her musical talents as a classical or rock band musician and composer. She now brings to the choral world her rich background in theater and music.

During the evening there were two sets in which our singers performed, not only in the expected format of an octet, but with solos and duets that created a virtual smorgasbord of extraordinary talent. The evening showcased the many artists associated with this Chorus, one added highlight being when Melissa and Matt took to the stage and performed together. Melissa's encore playing the piano upside down (see next page) brought this highly entertaining evening to a close. (For similar enjoyment, don't miss our gala event at the end of this season!)

Melissa attended the Chorus rehearsal on Saturday and the season's opening concert on Sunday where she heard the first live performance of her composition *Alpha and Omega*. It was remarkable!

Gill Waltman

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Philip Barnes and Melissa Dunphy

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Message from the President



Surprise performance by Melissa Dunphy!

Our 60th season started strong the last weekend in September with a Friday night celebratory kickoff event for our Diamond Jubilee and the season's first concert on Sunday. **Melissa Dunphy**, our newest Composer-In-Residence, and her husband Matt joined us for both occasions. They were able to enjoy the Chorus's world premiere performance of *Alpha and Omega*, Melissa's first composition as our Composer-In-Residence, which our audience loved.

This celebration, the first of two major events we have scheduled for the 60th Season, was unique, and offered everyone who attended a special, very entertaining glimpse into the very deep well of talent of our Chorus members. We even enjoyed a completely unexpected demonstration of Melissa Dunphy's unique skills when she played Bach's *Prelude in C*, upside-down! Mark your calendars now to join us on Sunday, May 29, 2016 for the second major event celebrating this 60th Jubilee Season, our season-ending gala right after our final concert of the year, *In Memoriam*, at St. Francis de Sales Oratory. This special event will give us all a chance to thank the Chorus for a very special season. We will have more information for you as we go through the year, but we want you to know about it so you can plan to join us.

Dick Brickson

Meet the Singers — Bentley Caughlan

Bentley was born in Dallas, moving at a young age to Cape Girardeau and by the time he was eleven, the family had settled in O'Fallon, Missouri. Bentley's father was a minister (who also played the accordion), his job being the reason for the frequent moves, and his mother was a music teacher. Not only did she introduce Bentley to music at a young age, (his first performance was at age four) but he says she continues to be an inspiration to him as she has always encouraged his musical interests. She may have set a record for being the most supportive Mom ever as he cannot remember a single performance of his, even now, that she hasn't attended!

Bentley, the only one of five children who was musical, sang in youth choirs as a youngster but not much in high school where his main interests were musical theater and jazz band—both very influential. He attended Missouri State University as a trumpet major but also played bass guitar. It was here that he met **Dr. Guy Webb** who persuaded him to switch to vocal education. His degree is in music education with an emphasis in voice.

He traveled with his college choir on two concert tours abroad. The first year was to Austria, Italy and Slovenia and two years later to Germany and France. Two life-



Bentley Caughlan

changing events occurred in 2010: First, his father died unexpectedly before the first concert tour, causing much sadness. However three months later while in the Hohen-salzburg (a medieval castle in Austria) with the choir, he proposed to Erin while the choir sang *Fly* by Susan Labarr. (She accepted!) They were married in 2012.

Bentley has always liked musical theater. Since his debut performance at age four, he thinks he has performed in over 50 productions, the most recent being *Les Miserables*.

After graduation, Bentley and Erin were both offered teaching jobs in St Louis. Bentley is the Assistant Choir Director at Mehlville High School overseeing 300 students. Erin is a music teacher in the Lindbergh district. When not working, Bentley likes cooking, musical theater (he likes to perform as much as possible) and spending time with Erin and their two lovely dogs.

The Caughlans heard about the Chamber Chorus from **Chris Kilfoyle**, a friend from college and a current Chorus member. Bentley auditioned as a bass and was accepted; Erin (soprano) auditioned soon after and joined at the next concert. They love singing under the direction of Philip Barnes.

Gill Waltman

Meet the Singers — Rebecca Hatlelid

Rebecca's love for music began with piano lessons at age 6 with **Thomas Finger**. She doesn't play much now, but it was the reason she started reading music at a young age. She was an incredibly shy child - unless she was singing! At age nine, she joined the St. Louis Children's Choirs traveling to numerous locations to perform, including the White House, Carnegie Hall, and different locations in Europe. While at Ladue High School, she sang in as many choirs as possible (under the direction of **Tom Lowery**), including Show Choir and All State Choir. Performing in so many choirs during high school with talented directors, along with the overwhelming support of her parents, was the reason she decided to pursue music at university.



Rebecca Hatlelid

Rebecca graduated from Southeast Missouri State University in 2010 with a Bachelor of Music Education. Surprisingly, her father tried to convince her to get a degree in performance instead of education. She fell in love with opera, playing Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro* and the Witch in *Hansel and Gretel*.

Rebecca married Ralph Boester in June 2011. Shortly before the wedding, **Holley Sherwood** convinced her to audition for the Chorus. With wedding plans finalized she decided 'Why not? She had first encountered the choir and **Philip Barnes** in 2006 as a senior in high school when she sang with the Children's Choir in a

joint concert with SLCC. She remembers being intimidated but thrilled hearing a choir with such interesting and challenging music. Her father and step-mother have been subscribers ever since.

She loved Philip's straight-forward manner during the audition, and knew without a doubt that she wanted to sing with this choir for many years to come. She remembers hearing that first powerful sound from the choir in her first rehearsal and thinking, "This is exactly where I need to be." She had never been challenged in a choral setting

until she joined SLCC. Rebecca says "I've learned so much more than I ever thought I would about musicianship by sitting in front of Philip and Martha every week." In fact, Rebecca enjoys the choir so much, she volunteered for the choral librarian job in 2014.

Rebecca taught musical theatre classes at COCA for a year from 2011-12 and has been substitute teaching since 2011. She doesn't plan to go full time because she wants time for the stage! She has sung with Union Avenue Opera since 2009 and had her first role as The Page in *Rigoletto* this past summer. She sang with Winter Opera St. Louis for a few seasons and loves collaborating with other musicians at the Tavern of Fine Arts. She currently sings at Holy Communion Episcopal Church under the direction of **Mary Chapman**.

Gill Waltman

Annual Chorus Picnic

Our 60th Season really kicked off with the annual Chorus Picnic, this year held on August 29th at the Ryan Hummert Memorial in Maplewood. The picnic has evolved into one of the organization's favorite events, where Chorus members can informally welcome new singers and Board members (and their families), as well as renew friendships with current singers after our summer hiatus.

We feasted on grilled chicken, hamburgers, veggie burgers, and hot dogs, plus the yummy side dishes and desserts brought by many of those who attended. The adjacent field and playground were perfect places to play on a gorgeous day! It was so much fun getting to know fellow singers and Board members.

Mary Chapman



Alto Amanda Meinen oohs and aahs over the delicious food!
(Photo by Charles Guthrie, husband of soprano Christine Guthrie).

Noteworthy Notes

Composers-in-Residence

When we established the 'Composer-in-Residence' program back in the 1990s our purpose was to identify composers who were in the early stages of writing choral music and encourage them to create specifically for us, but in a manner that would make their new music appealing to, and approachable by, other like-minded choirs. Nearly twenty years later, we may look back with satisfaction at the accomplishment of the three past composers associated with us, and we may keenly anticipate how our new composer will rise to the challenge.

Clearly, we have been lucky. The first incumbent, **Sasha Johnson Manning**, has gone on to write major works for numerous choirs on both sides of the Atlantic, and her music is regularly heard on the BBC in her native England. Her successor, **Clare Maclean**, has developed a reputation as one of Australia's leading choral writers, winning accolades in the media and many recordings by ensembles in both the southern and northern hemispheres. Most recently, we were privileged to be associated with **Yakov Gubanov** who, since training in Moscow with Shostakovich, has enjoyed an illustrious career both as a teacher and expert on silent movies in the Soviet era. He has come late to choirs, and it has been our honor to accompany him on his choral 'voyage of discovery'.

We have maintained close relationships with all three 'Composers-in-Residence', and each one has agreed to write a new work for us in this 60th anniversary season. To their number we now add **Melissa Dunphy** whose unique background in theater and music adds an extra layer of experience to the writing process. We can already see a dramatic strain in her first piece for us, *Alpha and Omega*, which we premiered at the opening concert of this season. Over the next few years, it will be fascinating to hear how she develops her 'choral voice' and challenges us to keep choral music vibrant and relevant to a new generation of choral enthusiasts. It promises to be a fun ride, and I invite you all, performers and listeners alike, to enjoy the journey.

CD – *St. Louis Firsts*

The finishing touches are now being applied to our next CD: *St. Louis Firsts* is a collection of works written or edited for us over the past ten years or so. As such, it's a unique anthology documenting not only the choir's rich sound, but also its commitment to keep choral music alive and vibrant. Among the composers represented are **Bob Chilcott**, **Sydney Guillaume** and **Howard Helvey**, and to demonstrate our commitment to women composers, they are complemented with **Sasha Johnson Manning**, **Clare Maclean** and **Judith Bingham**.

Accolades for our last CD on the Regent label are still coming in—in this month's issue of the national Choral Journal, our *American Declarations* is described as "a delightful collection of captivating works . . . performed beautifully . . . a powerful and enjoyable recording." Just wait until they hear the next CD! However, you will be able to preempt the critics as we will 'pre-release' *St. Louis Firsts* in time for this Christmas.

Philip Barnes

SLCC will travel to sing in Kansas City!

To celebrate our Diamond Jubilee we are introducing the choir to audiences further afield through not only a new CD, but also with a concert performance outside St. Louis. Next Saturday, November 14, the Chamber Chorus performs at 5 pm a special concert in Kansas City, at Grace & Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Please share the news with friends in the Kansas City area, and encourage them to attend this rare event. And why not consider coming along and supporting us as we perform for the first time in the west of Missouri? Details may be found at www.kccathedral.org.

Philip Barnes

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