



The Voice of Orpheus

Volume 9, Issue 3

Spring 2008



A Quarterly Newsletter of Sons of Orpheus - The Male Choir of Tucson

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Grayson Hirst, Founder/Artistic Director

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Orpheus Spreads It Around (Not the Flu!)

We'll have four venues for our seven-teenth spring concert schedule. In addition to our usual program at Pima College's Proscenium Theater, we'll be singing in Tucson Estates, SaddleBrooke, and Heritage Highland Country Club. Now people have practically no excuse to miss us. Most of the Snowbirds will not have fled, and although it's true that baseball season will be underway, April games

don't have quite the import they'll have in September and October. For hikers, bikers, and golfers the weather will be gorgeous, but so will the music.

As our rehearsals intensify, several pieces are charging through the ever-widening spaces between my little gray cells. At the moment Norman Luboff's arrangement of "The Old Chisholm Trail" is in the lead. Close behind is a song of a very different racing stripe: an arrangement for men's voices of Bach's "Jesus bleibet meine Freude" (Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring.) Moving up rapidly is an homage by Knut Nystadt, "Immortal Bach," adapted for us by baritone Mike Fraser. Mike describes the piece in these words:

"In Nystadt's work the choir first sings the traditional chorale, and then divides into several groups to repeat it, but with each group singing notes of different lengths. The result-

Continued p.2

Sons of Orpheus - The Male Choir of Tucson 17th Annual Gala Spring Concert Series 2008

FOUR PERFORMANCES

**Sunday, March 30,
2:00 p.m.**
Tucson Estates,
Multi-purpose Bldg.,
5900 W. Western Way Cir.
Tickets:
\$5. residents
\$7 non-residents
For info call
Dianne
at 883-8930.

**Sunday, April 6,
3:00 p.m.**
Proscenium Theater,
Center for the Arts,
Pima Community College,
West Campus,
2202 West Anklam Rd.
For ticket information call
the Arts Box Office
at 520-206-6986.
Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Friday, April 11,
7:30 p.m.**
DesertView Performing
Arts Center,
SaddleBrooke.
For
ticket information
contact
Patricia Beeks,
Events Manager
at 520-825-5318.

**Sunday, April 13,
3:00 p.m.**
Heritage Highland
Country Club,
4949 W. Heritage Club
Blvd., Marana.
For
ticket information,
call
Aileen
at 520-579-9574.

ing ethereal wash of sound moves into dissonance before resolving into the pure, clean, final chords of the chorale.”

Mike also adapted the “Humming Chorus” from Giacomo Puccini’s *Madama Butterfly*, a lovely thing indeed. And just to give us a break from the foreign language pieces, we’ll be humming it in English.

Wait! What’s that buzzing sound? Ah. A new entry. We are accompanying Chris Hutchinson, our first tenor/clarinetist in Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov’s “Flight of the Bumble Bee” from the opera, *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, composed in 1899-1900.

My synapses may be deteriorating with age, but Rimsky-Korsakov’s circuitry was downright scrambled from the beginning. He experienced synesthesia, a condition in which normally discrete senses are not separate but cross-wired. He perceived colors associated with major keys, as follows:

Tonic note	Color
C	white
D	yellow
E flat	dark bluish-grey
E	sparkling sapphire
F	green

G rich gold
A rose

Bass Tom Wentzel, who adapted “Flight of the Bumble Bee” for us, suggests that Rimsky-Korsakov might have been seeing black and yellow stripes when he was writing it. By the way, they say that now and then an arranger becomes so absorbed in his work that he takes on the physical characteristics of the composer. Tom even grew glasses.

NM



Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov



Tom Wentzel

Photo by Ivan Berger

Maurice And The Magic Envelope

We are pleased to dedicate our seventeenth annual spring concert series to founding member Maurice Magee and the Magee family for their generous establishment of the Sons of Orpheus Endowment Fund, to be managed by the Community Foundation of Southern Arizona.

Maurice was an important part of the music in our past. Now he is an essential part of our future. We look forward to seeing Maurice and his wife

Carol often at our concerts in the years to come.

Maurice’s gift reminds us of the old saw by David Everett,

“Large streams from little fountains flow,
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.”

You might put the envelope you find in this issue to several uses. For example, you could enclose a check to:

- water the oak tree Maurice Magee has planted. If so, mark the memo line with the words Endowment Fund.
- help our University of Arizona student singers with our European trip this summer. If so, write Scholarship Fund in the memo line.
- contribute to our operating expenses. In that case, write General Fund in the memo space.

For a sweetener, and to thank you for reading our March newsletter, donations toward all three of the

above categories, if postmarked by March 31, qualify you to win a \$100 gift certificate for Fleming’s Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar, 6360 N. Campbell Avenue. Two such certificates are available, so there will be two winners unless someone gets really lucky!

Here’s how it works: Ten bucks gets you a ticket in Grayson Hirst’s ten gallon hat. Each additional \$10 gets you another ticket, and so on. Two winners will be pulled from the hat during our Spring Gala at Pima College’s Proscenium Theater, West Campus, Sunday, April 6 at 3:00 p.m. We’ll put the name and address from your check on each ticket, so you need not be present to win, but it’s a lot more fun if you’re there to yell out “Yippee” when your name is called.

We remind you that we are a 501 (c) 3, not for profit organization, and that amateur singing is an expensive proposition. We do a lot of good things for the community: our Tucson Community Food Bank concert, the Glassman Foundation concerts, the Patro-



nato San Xavier concerts, and our participation in the Veterans Day event at the VA Hospital and the Twelfth Annual Concert of All Ages: An Intergenerational Choral Festival.

We do sing for our supper, we pay our dues, and we get grants from the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Tucson Pima Arts Council, but the grants are going to suffer a big hit this year because of funding problems resulting from shortfalls in state and local coffers. **We need you!**

Of course, you can use the envelope to make a paper airplane or practice your origami. If we don't hear from you, we'll know that's what happened.

By the way, you'll notice that the envelope is large enough to hold more than one check. We thank you in advance in this informal way, and we'll thank you formally later.

Order Tickets through the Newsletter

Write us at Sons of Orpheus, P.O. Box 31552, Tucson, AZ 85751 to order tickets to our April 6 Spring Gala Concert. That way, you can wave to your friends as they stand in the will-call line or at the box office, praying they'll get tickets before the SRO sign

goes up. (You'll get that first-class passenger feeling as the coach-class struggles by, jealously eyeing your martini.) Ticket prices are \$15; \$12 for students. **Be sure to enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your order.** Something like the following is all the information we need:

Please send me _____ regular tickets and _____ student tickets for the Sons of Orpheus Spring Gala Concert, April 6 at 3:00 p.m., at Pima College's Proscenium Theater, Center for the Arts, 2202 West Anklam Road.

Enclosed, find my check for \$ _____.

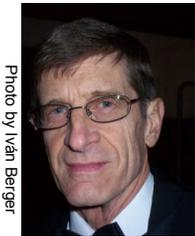


Photo by Ivan Berger

David Yetman



WHISTLING

At the beginning and the end of our own Jim Hogan's "Arizona for the Holidays," the choir whistles a melody for a couple of measures. Or, at least most of the choir whistles, because some of our men can't whistle no matter how great the effort. I suppose with adequate training we would all become passable whistlers, as I am, and maybe of few of us true virtuosi. My father was a terrific whistler. My mother was nearly whistle-free.

Is whistling learned or hard-wired? When I was younger I envied the fellows (and a couple of girls) who could emit ear-shattering whistles, some of them just by blowing a certain way through their lips or blowing through their tongue held in a certain position, others by holding their thumb and a finger in an O placed in a certain way to their lips. A friend of mine can whis-

tle chopsticks. Not just the top or bottom notes, mind you, but both notes simultaneously. He taught his daughter to do the same, although her technique never matched his. Based on his success, it seems that to some extent, whistling can be learned. Perhaps it's just as well that the art is not widely taught, for some folk (surely an uncharitable minority) find whistling obnoxious, and, well, vulgar. That's their problem, but their numbers are significant and some of them are politically and socially well connected.

Those who are philistine about whistlers would do poorly among the Chinantecan people of the northern part of the Mexican state of Oaxaca. The language spoken by Chinantecans and many other languages in this linguistically-rich region is tonal, like Cantonese. The meaning changes when the tone or inflection changes. (This phenomenon is alien to English speakers. We may change tone for emphasis, but that is about all. College students nowadays exhibit coolness by raising the tone at the end of a statement, making it sound like a question, and raising an urge in the listener to strangle them!)

Chinantecan speakers, especially those from the town of San Pedro Sochiapam and a few other villages (I'll be filming there one day soon) take tonality to a delightful extreme: they have a whistling language.

All men in the area use whistle speech and carry on complex conversations with it. The whistling has a distinct rationale, for the topography of the area is tortured, with deep canyons and many cornfields tilting dangerously on the steep hillsides. Spoken communication in such an area would involve a lot of shouting, so the men save considerable energy and preserve their vocal cords by whistling. Also, shouting is considered a rude characteristic of Mestizo society. The Chinantecos are able quite successfully to communicate whatever they wish with their associates as far as a kilometer away. The men use different whistling styles to communicate at different distances. Placing the tongue against the alveolar ridge is used for close-by communication. Using both lips produces a whistle audible for about 200 meters. Whistling with the fingers in the mouth can be heard over a kilometer away (no surprise here!). This is whistling taken to a desirable extreme. Whistling is learned, not hard-wired, as the Chinantecan whistlers demonstrate.

An ominous cloud hangs over the future of the whistlers: cellphones have arrived in the region and are far easier to use than whistling. If Jim Hogan needs to pick up some whistlers for future compositions, he had better get to Oaxaca soon.

Profiling Jeffrey Handt

One moment on a day in March 1984, twenty-nine-year-old Jeff Handt stood six feet ten inches tall. The next moment he was six feet six, having fallen through the floor of a truck he was unloading, compacting his spine and the bones in his right leg and ankle. Although in some ways his life changed forever, as things have turned out, that incident has enriched other lives.

Jeff had been a hard worker from his early teens. In fact he had made enough money to take a bus trip from Tucson to Iowa all by himself during the summer between his freshman and sophomore years at Palo Verde High School. A singer all his life, Jeff whiled away the time on that long ride by singing to himself, discovering that other travelers liked his voice well enough to surprise him with a few dollars. (At Palo Verde, Jeff sang for choral director Lane Justice in a choir that received distinction on the state level.) During the seven weeks Jeff spent with his Midwestern relatives, he grew 12 inches and gained 100 pounds, giving a quantifiable meaning to the term corn-fed.

In addition to his regimen of hard work, Jeff had been an active outdoorsman, acquiring skills through his participation in the Lutheran Boy Pioneers, a Scout-like organi-

zation. He and his parents and brothers hunted dove, quail, and deer.

For four years after his accident, Jeff remained a hard worker, except that during those years the work involved learning to live with severe limitations. Illness and a subsequent injury led Jeff to a chronic pain management group, a group he eventually helped to teach.

After that, the hardest adjustment Jeff faced was not being able to get work. He had earned an Associate's degree from Chaparral College in Marketing and Accounting in 1980, so he decided to put it use by starting a men's clothing store he'd call Big Guys. That dream died when a small business loan was denied him upon the discovery of his disability.

These misfortunes might lead one to think Job would have been a more fitting name than Jeff, but Jeff refuses

to see it that way. He says, "I persevere. Where others quit and let negative attitudes take over, I keep on going."

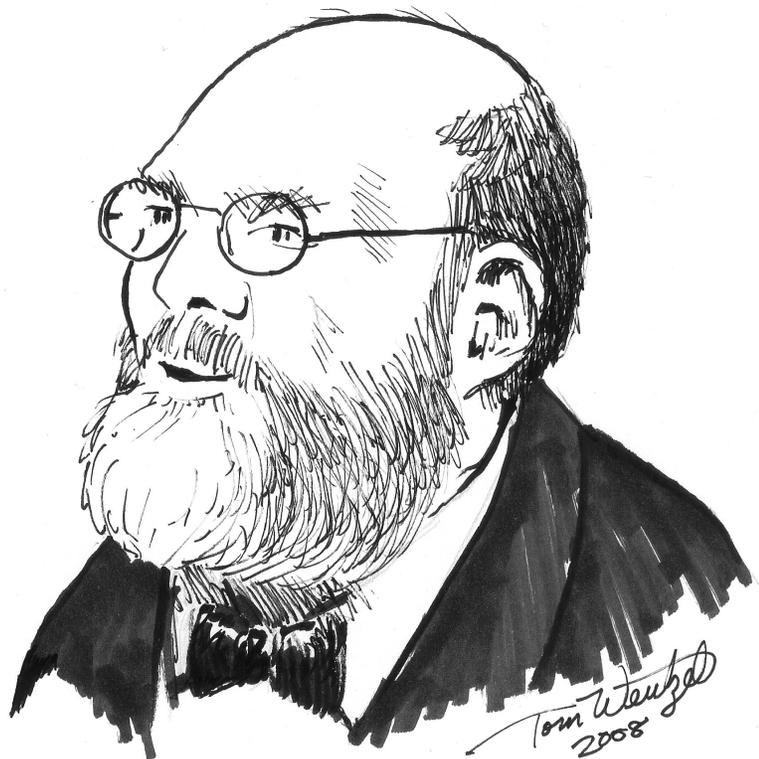
Jeff is currently serving his second term on the City of Tucson's Commission on Disability Issues, this time as vice chairman. And he is chairman of the subcommittee on services, programs, activities, and architectural barriers.

Having received specialized training through the NRA to become a certified instructor, Jeff has taught firearms education and safety for the Arizona Game and

Fish Commission since 1987. He also teaches archery and his favorite class, muzzle-loading rifles.

A stalwart in our bass section, Jeff is also our librarian, but one choir is not enough for him. He sings with the choir of a church he and his family helped to found, Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran, and with Reach the World, a choir that travels widely and specializes in contemporary Christian music.

Jeff earns our gratitude and respect as a valued member of Orpheus. He knows only one way in this life: the way forward, the way of service to his fellow man.



A year . . .



Photo by Iván Berger

with Orpheus By Frank Hartline

I first heard about the Sons of Orpheus from Iván Berger about five years ago when we sang together in the "Arts Express" Fourth of July Concert. Midway through the 2006-07 season I was invited to join Orpheus by Larry Sayre, a fellow choir member at Catalina Foothills Church. I wound up in the bass section for balance, although my baritone range usually provides a low F only early in the morning. Now, at the end of my first full year in the choir, I have been asked to provide some impressions for newsletter subscribers and choir members.

Because of my late start, last year's spring concerts went by in a blur. Grayson Hirst's impeccable choice of music and the wonderful soloists were the highlights for me. The party after the SaddleBrooke concert, the last one of the spring, was a good way to wrap up the season and help me get to know my choir mates, whom I have found to be an interesting and welcoming group of men, particularly Mike Fraser for what to do, Jim Hogan for where to stand, and Jeff Handt for the reams of multi-lingual music that every Orphean must master.

The 2007 Christmas season was my first with Orpheus. It was extremely busy, the concerts at Mission San Xavier especially memorable—an opportunity to sing beautiful music in an in-

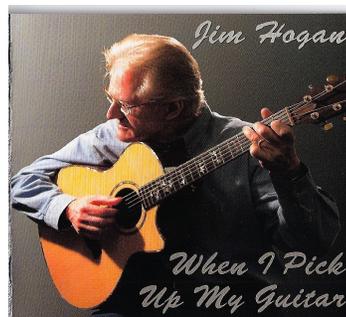
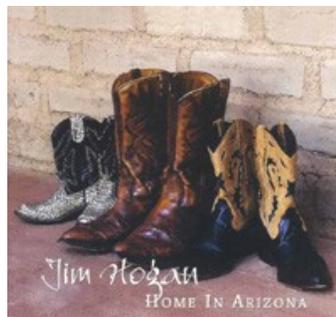
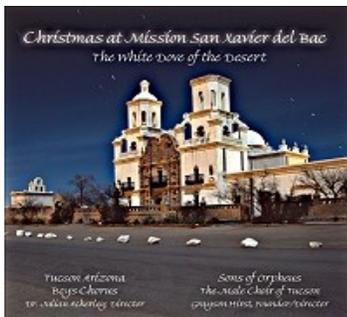
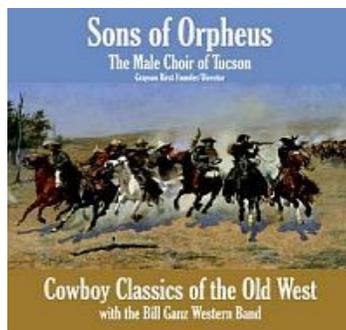
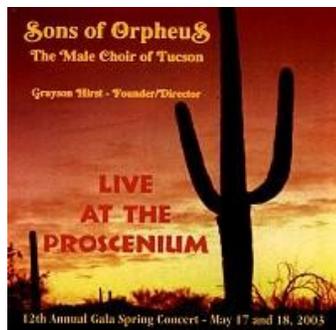
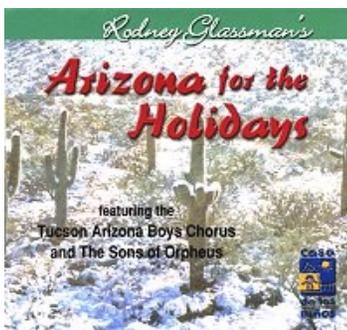
spiring, historic setting. I hope this signature performance will continue to bless Tucson and those who sing there for many years to come.

We had a challenging, twenty-song program in several languages for the SaddleBrooke Christmas concert, and we came through with an exhilarating performance for a most appreciative audience. The SaddleBrooke afterglow gathering was another great one. This choir loves to sing, but it also loves to party.

The February concerts with the Arizona Balalaika Orchestra were thrilling, and the post-concert party was, as advertised, authentic: icy vodka, Slavic dishes (including my own homemade borscht), and impromptu singing and dancing.

The coming spring concerts, like spring itself, offer many opportunities for regeneration and new growth. The prospect of a European tour in July brightens the summer calendar. What a great opportunity we have been given to join Grayson Hirst and make beautiful music.

(Frank recently retired from his position as Senior Business Development Manager, Raytheon Guided Projectiles. Frank wrote a poem in remembrance of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto which we are proud to feature on page 6.)



Our CDs

You can order these on our Website:
www.sonsoforpheus.org



Benazir Bhutto Farewell

How beautiful you were to all the world:
With flashing eyes and crimson framed bright smile,
An exiled princess grieving for her realm,
A veiled courageous head to calm the mob.

Why leave the warm salon for rabid streets?
To show a General courage or disgrace?
Was martyrdom an outcome worth the chance
For fame and family in a fractured land?

How poignant was the manner of your death
A fragile flower in an armored pot,
Crushed by bigot bomb and army steel
And pressed within a ravaged nation's book.

Who kills a woman in the name of God
For hope of virgins on a fleecy cloud?
Who keeps all women hiding in black robe
Beyond the shame of Satan's apple eyes?

What hatred grows so great it must explode,
To mangle guilty, innocent and self.
If heaven comes by deeds you are not there,
If judged by faith you shine among the damned.

We Sons of Liberty remember days
When priest and king conspired in palace halls
To crush the rights of men to rule themselves;
But patriots died to break the tyrant's chains.

We've been through Dallas streets and Memphis nights
To take assassin blows on noble heads,
We know the grief of promises unkept
Yet kindle freedom's flame on martyr graves.

You desperate millions crying to be free,
Remember well that veiled courageous head
And keep her vision fast within your sight
To build a land your children need not fear.

Escape the caves of darkness for a light
Beyond the bomb's brief flash that blinds all sight,
Reject false prophets who would rule by fear,
And pass unfilled collection plates of hate.

Escape the feudal world of holy rule,
Close schools of hate and teach your children how
Free people fight with words by rules of law,
Spurn gun and jail and know their blessing's true.

Frank Hartline
January 2008

Exchange Rate Be Damned, We're Going Anyway!

(And we still have some room for roadies on the bus.)

1. Bare Bones Tour Description

July 14 Depart USA.
July 15 Arrive Frankfurt and travel by bus to Leipzig.
Stay in Leipzig.
July 16 Concert. Stay in Leipzig.
July 17 Concert. Stay in Leipzig.
July 18 Travel by bus from Leipzig to Prague.
Stay in Prague.

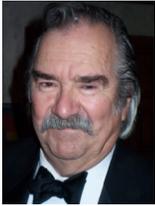


Photo by Ivan Berger

A Pilgrimage

By Grayson Hirst

Leipzig is a city I have longed to visit since I first fell in love with great music — the city of Johann Sebastian Bach. Here he spent the last twenty-seven years of his life as cantor, organist, and choirmaster of the Thomaskirche and three other churches. For me, it's a pilgrimage.

Fairly early in my career I gravitated from the world of opera toward oratorio singing because I liked the artistic challenge of being one with the music. No costumes, no wigs, no makeup, no choreography — just singer and conductor, words and notes. The roles of the Evangelist in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and in his *St. John Passion* became part of the bread and butter of my oratorio career. In training myself for these roles, which I have sung many times and in many places around the world, I have come to know Bach, the person!

(In fact, I'll be singing the *St. John Passion* with the Wieck Chamber Players on Saturday evening, May 17, 7:00 p.m. at Grace St. Paul's Episcopal Church. That's not too long before we leave on our tour, so I'm sure the

music will be running through my head as we enter Leipzig.)

But there's even more to Leipzig! As though it couldn't be satisfied with just Bach, it's the city of Goethe's *Faust* and Schiller's "Ode to Joy", the birthplace of Richard Wagner, the home of Robert and Clara Schumann, and the place where Felix Mendelssohn was born and died.

Orpheus will take along music from our spring concerts to pay homage to three of these great composers: Wagner's "Lied des Steuermanns" from *Der Fliegende Holländer*, Mendelssohn's "Recitative und Chöre" from his unfinished oratorio *Christus*, and Bach's "Jesus bleibet meine Freude" ("Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring"), which we'll sing in the Thomaskirche. And we'll join the massed choirs at the Leipzig International Choral Festival to sing sections from Mendelssohn's oratorio *Elijah*.

Before we leave Leipzig, we will arrange time for a fantastic photo opportunity — Orpheus grouped around the bronze statue of Johann Sebastian Bach in front of the Thomaskirche. There he stands, the great man with his coat pockets hanging inside out — a humanizing touch meant to convey the fact that Bach, the father of twelve children, was almost always broke!

I have only one child, Dalton. He is going with me on this tour. We may wind up broke too, considering the sad state of the dollar against the euro, but we'll be richer in other ways for the rest of our lives.



Going Anyway

- July 19 Concert. Stay in Prague.
- July 20 Stay in Prague.
- July 21 Travel by bus from Prague to Salzburg.
Stay in Salzburg.
- July 22 Concert. Stay in Salzburg.
- July 23 Travel by bus from Salzburg to Munich.
Stay in Munich.
- July 24 Stay in Munich.
- July 25 Fly to USA.

2. Delta Flight Numbers

- July 14 Tucson-Atlanta - Delta 1674 - 6:50AM/1:10PM
- July 14 Atlanta-Frankfurt -Delta 14 - 4:30PM/7:45AM
+ 1 day
- July 25 Munich-Atlanta - Delta 131 - 10:05AM/2:30PM
- July 25 Atlanta-Tucson - Delta 849 - 6:50PM/7:52PM

3. Hotels

- July 15, 16, and 17 Leipzig: Tulip Inn, Leipzig.
Website: www.goldentulip.com
- July 18, 19, and 20 Prague: Best Western PREMIER Hotel
Majestic Plaza.
Website: www.hotel-majestic.cz

July 21 and 22 Salzburg: Hotel NH, Salzburg City.
Website: www.nh-hotels.com/nh/en/hotels/austria/salzburg/nh-salzburg-city.html

July 23 and 24 Munich: Hotel Wallis and Hotel Präsident (located within 2 minutes of each other on the same street).
Website: <http://munich.hotel-wallis.tobook.com/Germany/Hotels/Hotel-Wallis?cityname=Munich>
Website: www.hotel-praesident.de

They all provide buffet breakfasts.

4. Tour Costs

We advised you last fall that the estimated full tour double-occupancy cost would be \$3,400 per person, with a land-only option of \$2,360. At that time, we stated the two variables that could affect the final price were exchange rate and the total number of travelers. We have a small cushion built in, but if the Euro stays in the \$1.50+ range, it could raise the tour cost \$50 or so.

You'll have to act fast. The money is due April 9. If you want to know all the details, email Mike Fraser at: Britcol58@aol.com. He'll send you a packet with complete information, including insurance details.





The Voice of Orpheus



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First tenor:

Eugene Friesen
Christopher Hutchinson
Tom McGorray
Bruce Mortensen
James Naughton
Matt Perri
Jim Tomlinson
Dick Wroldsen

Second tenor:

Jim Hogan
Van Honeman
Bob Kurtz
Richard Miller
Allan Petersen
Larry Ross
Larry Sayre

Baritone:

Mike Bradley
Chuck Dickson
Pete DiCurti
Dave Eschhofen
John Evans
Jim Filipek
Cameron Fordyce
Michael Fraser
David Harrington
Ned Mackey
Rick Sack
Raymond Tess

Bass:

Ron Bailey
Iván Berger
Jeffrey Handt
Frank Hartline
George Ledbetter
Gary Smyth
Thomas Wentzel
Woo Yin Wong
David Yetman

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