



The Voice of Orpheus

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Winter 2008



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

Editor: Ned Mackey - Design: Iván Berger

Grayson Hirst, Founder/Artistic Director

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A Memorable Rehearsal

Monday, December 10, Orpheus had an hour on the risers at Mission San Xavier del Bac to rehearse the numbers we were to do by ourselves in the annual Christmas concerts the following Tuesday through Thursday. After a few stops and starts to clean up small problems, we were all set for the arrival of the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus, various soloists, and a brass choir. They trooped in, found their places, and we were ready to finish the rehearsal together. It was one the musicians and the customary wall-to-wall audience are likely to remember for a while.

de Noël" or "O Holy Night," halfway through "O night divine," the lights went out, the organ went dead, and the grand old mission took a step backward. It was a big step, 210 years to 1797 when the building was brand new—a simpler time, a simpler place, lit only by hundreds of candles that rimmed the walls.

To make the moment even better, the boys finished with two memorized pieces, just able to see their director by candlelight. Afterwards, we walked out into a divinely pitch-black night . . .

During Adolphe Adam's famous "Cantique



. . . quite breathtaking.



Our Concert Schedule for Winter and Spring 2008

Sat., Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m.
Arizona Balalaika Orchestra's Annual Winter Concert of Russian Music and Dance featuring guest artists Tamara Volskaya and Anatoly Trofimov at the Center for the Arts, Proscenium Theatre, Pima Community College, West Campus, 2202 W. Anklam Rd. Tickets \$15, \$10 for students. Arts Box Office phone number: 520-206-6986. For further information call 520-743-2347.

Sun., Jan. 27 at 2:00 p.m.
As above

Sat., Feb. 9 at 6:24 p.m.
"The National Anthem" at McKale Center. Go Cats, beat ASU!

Fri., Feb. 15 at 7:30 p.m.
An Evening of Love Songs, presented by the Glassman Foundation. Orpheus will perform with the Southern Arizona Women's Chorus in Crowder Hall, at the U of A School of Music. For ticket information visit: glassmanfoundation.org.

Sun., Mar. 30 at 2:00 p.m.
17th Annual Spring Concert at Tucson Estates, Multi-purpose Bldg., 5900 W. Western Way Circle. Tickets \$5. For info call Dianne at 883-8930.

Sun., Apr. 6 at 3:00 p.m.
17th Annual Spring Concert at The Center for the Arts, Proscenium Theatre, Pima Community College, West Campus, 2202 West Anklam Rd. For ticket information call the Arts Box Office at 520-206-6986.

Fri., Apr. 11 at 7:30 p.m.
17th Annual Spring Concert at DesertView Performing Arts Center, SaddleBrooke. For ticket information contact Patricia Beeks, Events Manager at 520-825-5318.

Sun., Apr. 13 at 3:00 p.m.
17th Annual Spring Concert at Heritage Highland Country Club, 4949 W. Heritage Club Blvd., Marana, AZ. For ticket information, call Aileen at 520-579-9574.



Brahms, Bertenshaw, and the TCO

We always enjoy singing with an orchestra, so we weren't surprised that it was such a pleasure to join with conductor Enrique Lasansky's Tucson Chamber Orchestra to sing Brahms' "Alto Rhapsody" at St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church on October 13th. The assignment was a little unusual in that we didn't utter a peep for the first eight minutes of the piece. Brahms reserved those eight minutes for an alto to shine, and Kaitlin Bertenshaw shone brightly indeed.

Kaitlin is a student in the School of Music at the University of Arizona. We thought our readers might enjoy an account of her preparations for the concert:



My journey with Brahms' "Alto Rhapsody" began as the 2006-2007 school year was closing. Grayson Hirst, my diction professor, was the catalyst for my adventure with the Tucson Chamber Orchestra, and the Sons of Orpheus.

Because I was a lowly sophomore just beginning to work out the kinks in my voice, the idea of singing with an orchestra and chorus as a soloist terrified me. Was I ready? After much deliberation, I concluded that this was the time for my first big solo performance. I sat down at the piano and learned the pitches. I found recordings of my idols: Christa Ludwig, Janet Baker, and Marilyn Horne and listened to them endlessly.

The "Alto Rhapsody" is one of the most difficult pieces I have ever had to learn, both pitch-wise and harmonically. It hasn't an accessibly melodic line like a Bellini or Mozart aria where you can predict a cadence from a mile away. It was hard work, but when I finally made my own melodic sense out of the line, it clicked.

The hardest parts of that piece are the bizarre intervals within the harmonic structure and how low it sits in the voice. Brahms orchestrated the piece with heavy brass that would scare any young singer, but singers must be able to carry over the orchestra if we are ever to get paid the "big bucks."

A few weeks and many hours of practice later, I auditioned for Dr. Lasansky. Then the real work began. Well, first, a vacation...

The audition was a week before I left to study in Germany for the summer. German is my minor and I adore the language, culture, and country. I have always felt that I was born in the wrong country. I am supposed to be German!

The most amazing part of the trip was my journey through the Harz Mountains, thinking about Goethe's inspiration for the poem that became Brahms' text. Even though I was on a luxury bus in June, and young Goethe was in a horse-drawn carriage in the middle of the bleak winter, imagining those glorious rolling hills covered in snow sent shivers down my spine. Of course, I listened to a recording of the Rhapsody on my iPod as I traveled deeper into the heart of the Harz. It was a moving pilgrimage that prepared me for another level beyond the music—the text.

Upon my return to the University of Arizona, I began to work with what I call the superteam of Michael Dauphinais, a wonderful pianist and coach, and his wife, Dr. Kristin Dauphinais, my voice teacher. Those two steered me through with expertise and sensitivity. They helped to prepare me to work with the orchestra, to access different colors of my voice, and how to respond to the other musicians and the conductor. Even though I ultimately stood at the front of that stage, it was truly a team effort. I am so lucky to have been surrounded by amazing musicians who guided me musically and in many other ways on this journey.

From the bottom of my heart I thank Grayson and his delightful Sons of Orpheus for giving me this opportunity. I hope it will be the first of many in my career. I will look back upon it with great fondness and wonderful memories.

Kaitlin Bertenshaw



Brahms and Beethoven in Junior High

Through the auspices of the Arizona Commission on the Arts "Arts Learning Program," the Tucson Chamber Orchestra has arranged to provide an artist in residence at three schools in the region.

The artist in residence is Ellen Chamberlain, the TCO concert master. She provides instruction for individuals and small groups of string players, and she encourages an appreciation of classical music.

Another part of the grant requires the orchestra to provide a free concert for students on a day following a paid concert, so we were lucky enough to sing the Brahms again. Because Miss Chamberlain's first assignment was at Utterback Middle Magnet School, that was the site chosen

for the orchestra's first twinned concert.

A few members of our choir are or have been teachers. They may have hoped that hundreds of kids would walk out of the Utterback auditorium whistling Beethoven or Brahms, having renounced Heavy Metal and Rap forever.

So what if the numbers were in the tens instead of the hundreds? So what if some kids couldn't wait to get their iPods plugged into their ears again? It was a noble effort, and a most rewarding one for the Sons of Orpheus.

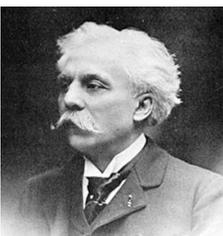
The TCO played at St. Gregory School in December and will finish their school season at Sahuarita High School on April 19th. See the Tucson Chamber Orchestra web site for more information: <http://TucsonChamberOrchestra.org>.

Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*

A favorite in this year's Christmas repertoire was Gabriel Fauré's *Cantique de Jean Racine*. We performed it at Mission San Xavier accompanied by organist Janet Tolman, and at SaddleBrooke and Heritage Highlands accompanied by pianist Brent Burmeister. Rebekah Butler played the violin solo sublimely at all three venues. We also performed the piece at Rodney Glassman's Family Arts Festival on January 13th, and we'll repeat it in our spring concerts. It's too glorious and too much fun to sing to let it go just yet.

Following are excerpts from program notes prepared by our founder/director Grayson Hirst:

"The nineteen-year-old Fauré composed Cantique de Jean Racine, op. 11, his first significant work, in 1864. It is a simple, meditative piece, offering a foretaste of the calm and peace of his



Requiem, op. 48, which he would begin to compose twelve years later. Cantique belongs to a style known as Saint-Sulpicien, named after the fashionable church of Saint-Sulpice on the Paris Left Bank where well-heeled congregations delighted in lyrical motets with easy melodies. (In 1871, Fauré became assistant organist and accompanist to the choir at Saint-Sulpice.)

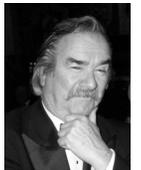
"Fauré's text is based on Jean Baptiste Racine's translation of a Latin hymn from the middle ages. Racine, a contemporary of Molière and Corneille, was 17 or 18 years old when he wrote these verses in 1655 or 56. He would go on to establish himself as one of the giants of French classical drama.

"Originally composed for four-part mixed (SATB) choir with organ or piano accompaniment, Cantique de Jean Racine was first performed in 1866. A version for harmonium and string quintet was conducted by César Franck in 1875. A full orchestral version followed in 1906. After his Requiem, op. 48, Cantique de Jean Racine remains Fauré's most popular choral work. Its sober, limpid harmonies and pliant, unfolding melodic lines reveal Fauré's deep familiarity with the polyphonic masters of the 16th and 17th centuries. Orpheus presents Cantique de Jean Racine in an arrangement for male voice choir, violin, and piano by K. Lee Scott (b. 1950). As you listen to Cantique, breathe in the transcendent calm and peace of a French cathedral."



So, in a collaboration separated by two centuries, two French teenagers created a masterpiece that our choir has loved to sing. We recorded it at Mission San Xavier on January 14th. It will appear on an all-Orpheus CD of sacred Christmas music which we intend to have available before next year's Christmas season.

Speaking of Christmas music, for the second consecutive year our "Christmas at Mission San Xavier" CD with the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus and various soloists sold briskly at Borders on Broadway and through the mail. See www.sonsoforpheus.org



Grayson Hirst

Our Annual Russian Gig

We are taking our rubashkas (colorful Russian shirts) out of mothballs (mozbalitski) and preparing for our annual appearance with the Arizona Balalaika Orchestra and the Kalinka Dancers, January 26 and 27th. (See schedule.) It's always an exciting program, and even if you're not a Slavophile, you'll recognize one of the songs Orpheus is performing with soprano Betty Allen: "Ochi Chornye." For these performances the ABO will be enriched by players from other balalaika orchestras around the

west.

The headliners are going to be fabulous! They are Tamara Volskaya, domra, and Anatoliy Trofimov, bayan. (The domra is a four-stringed, plucked instrument, and the bayan is an accordion-like instrument with buttons on both sides of the keyboard.)

Volskaya and Trofimov comprise one of the most electrifying musical duos to be found anywhere in the world. Winners of international and national competitions, "Merited Artists of Russia," and profes-

sors of the Ural State Conservatory, the virtuosi have toured throughout the former Soviet Union, Europe, Canada, Australia, Japan, and the United States. They have been fea-

tured on NPR's "All Things Considered," and on WMAR-ABC TV.

They have performed with their "Russian Carnival Ensemble" at the Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall and at Carnegie Hall, and they have produced several outstanding recordings. Their CDs will be available at the January concerts.



David Yetman

Photop by Iván Berger

on the Origin of Harmony

Voltaire, one of history's most prominent cynics, supposedly observed that in conquering the Americas, Europeans traded Christianity and

smallpox for tobacco and syphilis. Indeed, a prominent theme among recent historians in the Americas has been to reverse the systematic distortion of the achievements of peoples living in the Americas at the time of the European invasions. I was taught as a child that peoples of the "New World" were uncivilized and technologically inferior to Europeans, that indigenous Americans lacked writing and metals and needed the wheel in order to emerge from their barbarian state, and that the arrival of conquistadors opened up the possibility for rapid social and technological advances.

This was patent nonsense because people in the Americas could match Europeans in virtually every category of learning. Writing had been in place in Mexico for more than two thousand years by the year 1500, and metallurgy based on copper was as advanced in the Americas as it was in Europe. The

wheel had been invented, but the lack of beasts of burden (no wild stock were suitable for carrying large loads) made its practical application problematic.

As we Orpheans were rehearsing in Mission San Xavier del Bac recently, it dawned on me that one true contribution of Europeans lay in the realm of choral music. Music was well advanced in the Americas at the time of Contact, especially percussion, flutes, single-stringed instruments, and wind tunes created by carefully wrought conch shell instruments. Americans have sung songs to accompaniments for millennia. Many peoples knew thousands of songs. When I was spending time with the Seri Indians during the late 1960s, an older Seri sang at a puberty festival for thirty-six hours straight without (his sons told me) repeating a single song. Indigenous peo-



ples of the northwest United States had elaborate singing rituals in which one group would sing roughly a third higher than another. But no one in the 1492 Americas was singing authentic choral music. However far we look, we will probably find that choral music originated solely in Europe. I suspect that its emergence was connected with the development of churches based on the arch, which permits the creation of large, open interiors. The cold, damp winters of Europe (and the Near East) required indoor spaces for effectively disseminating religious themes and catechizing the uneducated. In the increasingly vast spaces made possi-

ble by the use of arches and vaults, the internal acoustics encouraged complex harmonies. Large church buildings needed larger singing groups and more clearly articulated harmonies. The emergence of Europe's great churches and great choirs seems to go hand-in-hand.

In contrast, monumental architecture in the Americas, though no less sophisticated, was largely exterior-oriented. Mesoamerica has a mostly tropical climate tempered by elevation. Outdoor spaces work just fine for congregating groups. Even the chilly Andean Altiplano is warm by comparison with the bitter winters that rage in most

of Europe. Acoustically, the outdoors poses a problem: the music of the human voice can easily be carried away by wind, and group harmonies tend to be inaudible except to a nearby few.

Can it be that thanks to climate and the arch, we have choral music? If so, thanks be to the inventors of the arch and to the climate gods who forced music indoors and gave us the opportunity to begin harmonizing. Europeans did at least one good thing for the indigenous peoples they encountered during their discovery of the continent.

Sons of Orpheus, rejoice!

Profiling Cameron Fordyce

Cam Fordyce is our financial secretary—the man who takes our money to the bank. His B.A. from Harvard ('59), his M.B.A from Columbia University in International Business, and his career with the Bank of New York and with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston give us confidence that the only bounce we'll ever have to worry about is if a catchy rhythm carries away the men on the top row of the risers.

After Cam retired from the Fed in 1994, he and his wife Jackie spent several months traveling in Europe, after which they returned to Boston where Cam started a new career as the developer and manager of a Master of Finance program at Northeastern University's Graduate School of Business.

In 2001 Cam re-retired and started thinking about winter sunshine, a phenomenon he and Jackie had come to comprehend during their many visits to Italy.

During a long stay in Rome, Cam studied voice lessons and Italian. Jackie studied Italian also and finished her class work at Rome's John Cabot University to earn her degree from Harvard. Their return to Massachusetts convinced them that a

warmer climate would be welcome. A visit to Cam's sister in Santa Fe got them headed in the right direction. Then it was on to Sedona, then to Green Valley. They finally made it the rest of the way to Tucson in 2003.

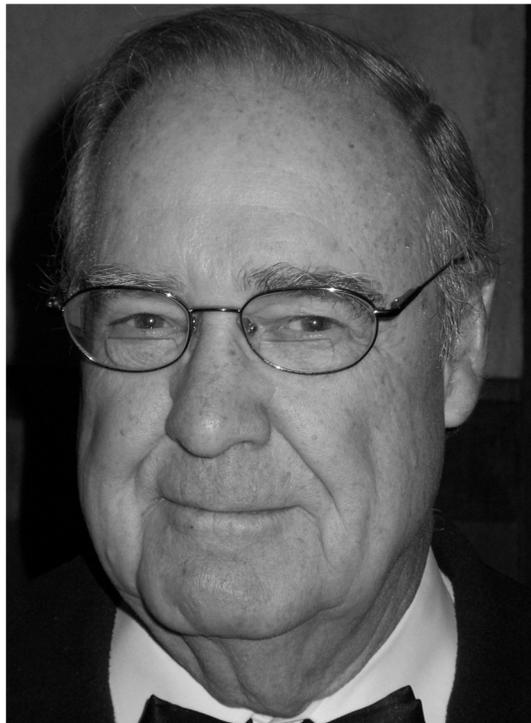
Jackie has never seen a house that she couldn't make better. Cam swears that he's torn out his last wall. Time and Jackie will tell.

In the folk-craze days, Cam enjoyed a remarkable run singing at the Club 47 Coffee House in Cambridge, the eastern equivalent of the Hungry I, a place where Joan Baez and other famous folk dropped in to sing between the local acts such as Cam's group, the Raunch Ants, a sextet that, who knows, might have become famous if they hadn't opted for jobs after graduation.

After college, except for vocal lessons and a stint with the chorus of the Longey School of Music in Cambridge, Cam hadn't done much singing until he found the Sons of Orpheus on the Internet. We hooked him, and he is in his fourth season with us. If Orpheus ever gets its own building, we know who will be in charge of renovation.

Cam and Jackie spend their summers in Marion, MA. It's their jumping off spot for visiting their kids and grandkids from coast to coast and in Italy. For a week during the past three summers, Cam

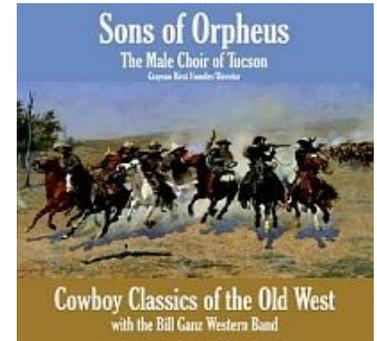
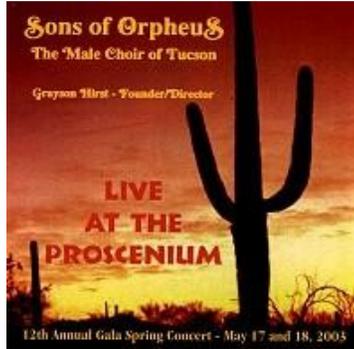
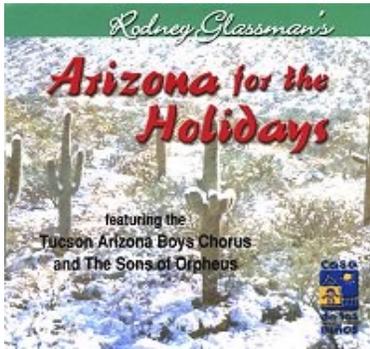
has sung with the 200-voice Berkshire Festival Choir. He enjoys this experience, but he comes back to us where he appreciates our eclectic repertoire and the many friendships he has made.



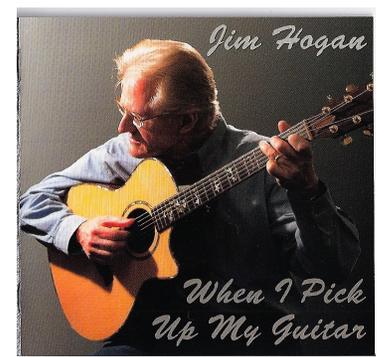
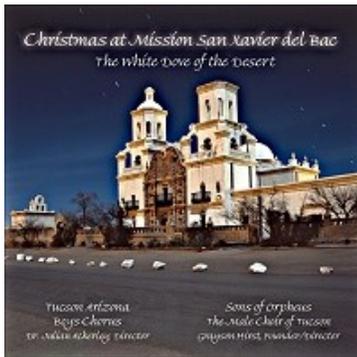
Photp by Iván Berger

Cam and Jackie have been married for 32 years, during which time they have renovated 29 homes and lived in 12 of them. One might be surprised that academia would have prepared the couple for the flipping game, but Cam says that

Our line-up of CDs



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



The Tucson Community Food Bank Christmas Concert

Orpheus took the stage at Berger Center on the campus of the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. We joined with students from the school, renowned jazz and flamenco guitarist Ismael Barajas, sign language interpreter Joe Camarillo, and blind soprano Jessica Rojas who was just back in town from a tour with Up With People. Orpheus Board member Mia Hansen ran the show in her always spirited style, and other Orpheus members collected food and money at the door. It was a wonderful evening of

music. The kids were beautifully prepared by their teacher John Corrin. Daringly, we signed one of our songs—“White Christmas.” We must have done well enough because the deaf members of the audience waved in appreciation and the blind members clapped and cheered. What more could performers ask for than two expressions of approval?

Jim Hogan, chairman of our Executive Committee, challenged us to increase the amount of food and money we collect for the Food Bank next year. To that end we are vowing to start working in September to build a larger

audience for this concert, the best feel-good concert of the season. We will also be looking for a corporate source to help us gather more food.

Orpheus chairman and Board members, and students and faculty from ASDB collected 2,202 pounds of food and \$2,278 during the weeks prior to the concert and from the intake at the door. We were happy to support the Food Bank in this way, but participating in the concert was equally satisfying.

We also wish to express our gratitude for the support and sponsorship Food City gave to this event.



Our Scholarship Fund

The scholarship fund for our University of Arizona student singers got a nice bump from our readers after the last newsletter. Our two young tenors are digging deep, and we hope you will too. If you'd like to

help, send a check to:

Sons of Orpheus

PO Box 31552

Tucson, AZ 85751

Please write

"scholarship fund"

in the memo space.

Because Sons of Orpheus is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, your contribution may be tax deductible.

Consult with your tax advisor.

**We thank you,
and our young singers
thank you also!**

SUMMER TOUR UPDATE

We still have ten seats open on the motor coach that will take us from Leipzig to Prague to Salzburg to Munich from July 14-25. The cost per person for the tour will be approximately \$3,400, of which \$1,700 is due during January (so you'll have to hurry!) and the balance before April 9. Medical and trip cancellation insurance is highly recommended; it must be paid with your first installment to guarantee coverage for all pre-existing conditions. The cost is \$129 for those 31 years of age or older at the time of the trip; \$99 for those who are younger.

For an information packet, write Sons of Orpheus, PO Box 31552, Tucson, AZ 85751, or call Dr. Larry Ross, 520-818-0480. Prospective singers should call Grayson Hirst, 520-621-1649.

Earl Wettstein's "Tucson Icons"

Twenty original oil paintings capture some of our city's most familiar and funky places.

On view and selling at the
Northern Trust Bank Community Room,
6444 E. Tanque Verde Rd.
September 4–October 31

Ekphrastic poems by Ned Mackey
accompany a dozen of the paintings.

Greeting cards with the images and poems are available at Mardon Frost Gallery in Plaza Palomino, and the Tucson Museum of Art.



The Voice of Orpheus



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Tom McGorray
Bruce Mortensen
James Naughton
Matt Perri
Adam Shelton
Jim Tomlinson
Jerry Villano

Second tenor:

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

Baritone:

Philippe Bodin
Mike Bradley
Chuck Dickson
Leo DiCurti
Pete DiCurti
Art Dumes
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John Evans
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