

2023 Year-end Review  
12/17/2023  
Paul Wiens, conductor

Your resiliency, determination, and dedication have carried us through a difficult fall season to a successful end of the year 2023. My Covid and the challenges with the SWS performances—to say nothing of the difficulties you may have personally faced—contributed to a somewhat stressful season. I admire your accomplishments.

Under Roger's leadership, our first performance with SWS was a success. Lucas Darger spoke repeatedly to me about your professionalism and nimble adaptation to the challenges of the Cox auditorium. Now, Lucas is considering a future SWS Chamber Orchestra series which would be a perfect match for us—watch this space.

Our first performance in the Catholic Church was well received. The excellent acoustics and your focus allowed us to survive miscues, early entrances, ragged ensemble, and most troubling, incremental, persistent flattening. Mixed formation—an option only when each singer can confidently perform his/her part—appears to be the solution to maintaining pitch; your ability to do so allowed us to rehearse and then perform at the Tabernacle with significant improvement. Congratulations!

Once parts are learned and major technical matters are resolved, then comes the important part: performing with fire! Starting with high quality repertoire—adjusting the tempi, tightening ensemble, expanding dynamic range, improving vocal production, and singing with a deep understanding will produce exciting performances.

My goal for the coming season is to create an enjoyable balance between woodshedding new repertoire and polishing the old.... while avoiding some of the crises we had this fall. Our roster now has a total of 39 singers (Ann & Bryn Hatch return) with good balance among men/women and eight sections. In a perfect world, I would still add one T2 and/or B1 but only if they were extraordinary musicians/singers; joining in the middle of a season is quite difficult because we will continue to polish the Martin, Stanford, and Mealor while starting rehearsal of the Panufnik, Ferko, and Webber. If you have someone to recommend, please let me know.

Regarding the future of the Chamber Singers as an organization, Matt Tenney (President) has led discussions with the board which are producing a more effective governance structure; Matt and Rachel Cox (Executive Director) have shared a few of these developments with you during announcements. I recently worked with the Artistic Committee (Roger Hale & Rachel Cox) to refine concert plans through Spring 2025; the next meeting will extend planning through Spring 2026 and beyond.

Founded in 2015, the St. George Chamber Singers is an ensemble of choral artists committed to excellence in the performance of vocal chamber music. Singing with increasing levels of tonal richness, expressive intensity, and compelling collective artistry, SGCS is setting new standards of choral virtuosity and musicianship in the Desert Southwest.