

Conductor's Comment

May 5, 2005

From one generation to another....

We should mark the completion of ten years since our founding. In the spring of 2015, Mark Robertson called to inquire whether I was interested in conducting a chamber choir, Rachel recruited 24 singers, three rehearsals were held at Grace Episcopal Church, an assessment led to auditions the next fall, the formation of a board....and the rest is now history. The path was seldomly a straight line—where would we rehearse/perform, what repertoire was best, how would we secure funding, where would singers be found to strengthen the ensemble, could we make a success of a highly-auditioned choral ensemble in St. George?

Our mission is to perform exceptional choral repertoire with tonal richness, expressive intensity and compelling artistry....to be, an ensemble of accomplished vocalists, raising the standard for choral singing and musicianship in the Desert Southwest.

Our artistic vision is to become southern Utah's premier choral chamber ensemble.

One measure of success is to evaluate how an institution like Chamber Singers has survived a challenge. The Covid crisis threatened our health, changed the way we met and interacted, and generally had a decidedly negative effect on music ensembles—who by design bring people together in proximity for rehearsals. Our ensemble, however, continued to grow in numbers and musical strength—a credit to the determination of leaders and members alike. We rehearsed in safe places and spread out, abandoned performances in interior spaces, made videos, wore masks....and eventually we learned to adapt to a new reality. One thing we learned: if you are infectious, either stay home or sit apart from other singers (don't "tough it out" and cough your way through a two-hour rehearsal).

And while I don't welcome the next crisis, it will come. I think about the challenges of Chamber Choir "Kiev"—how to run a choir in places where violence, famine, and disease are a constant threat—and I am grateful that we can produce beautiful music in our privileged environment of peace and tranquility.

By comparison, the Vesper's Choral concert was a mini challenge: we had recently sung two performances of the Brahms *Requiem*, just survived a busy Easter week, and had eight members who could not sing the concert (business trips, illness, pressing family matters). Despite the odds, you performed admirably, leaving me with a glow of success. Your audience was justifiably enthusiastic.... demonstrated by their applause and impressive

donations. Of course, it was a live concert.... and the list of spots which beg for rehearsal is significant.... but also, a lot of moments which I feared.... were instead glorious.

Father Rob—who personally funded the concert—was glowing, was so happy that you brought such beauty to his little, growing parish....and already mentioned bringing you back.

The board will meet this Wednesday to consider the coming concert season: budgets, venues, repertoire, and more. Following that meeting, I will announce exciting news which I must hold closely for the moment!

With the season's plans formally in place, I will turn my attention to building our membership for 2025-26. While I anticipate the return of significant singers (especially basses), I also have a list of prospects who will be pursued; if you plan not to continue, please let Rachel know ASAP. Help with the building of our chorus by contacting and nominating strong musicians—send me their contact info with a short musical bio and have them contact me directly. I will schedule auditions with the goal of settling the membership by mid-summer.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place from one generation to another. (Psalm 90)