

GRAND NOTES

THE VOICE OF THE GRAND RIVER CHORUS

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



When great musicians get together, great things happen. Sometimes, wonderful musicians are brought together by a person of vision.

*Such was the case in 1979, which led to the composition of the main work in our next concert. I quote here from Paul Winter's notes at the front of the score of **MISSA GAIA**...*

*I*n New York for my first meeting with Dean Morton at St John's (St John

the Divine Episcopal Cathedral), he asked me if I wanted to try the acoustics. I took my soprano sax into the empty Cathedral...and began to play. The sound floated and hovered and seemed to glow with a richness I had never known before. It was intoxicating. The Cathedral seemed a perfect acoustic space for my horn.

Then the Dean, with characteristic enthusiasm, asked if I would like to improvise with the organist. Wanting to be polite, I hesitatingly said "yes," but I wondered what I might play with a church organist. The Dean went to a phone, and a few minutes later a tall, smiling young guy appeared, whom the Dean introduced as Paul Halley. As Paul made his way up to the organ loft, I went to stand below in the Great Choir. I have no idea why, but I began playing a slow ascending arpeggio that happened to be the first five notes of "I Loves You Porgy," and immediately Paul came in with the first chord of that song. Realizing then what I'd started, I went on to play the second phrase and Paul followed right along with Gershwin's chords. We continued through the whole song together, and then improvised a free duet, as if we had played together for years. ... I had not only found one of the greatest improvising organists on the planet, but also met a soul brother who

would be my musical collaborator for the next seventeen years.

The Dean asked the two of them to collaborate on a Mass with typical twentieth century music, specifically using the jazz idiom. The two Pauls got together with the other members of the Paul Winter ensemble and produced the **MISSA GAIA** or Earth Mass. It celebrates the world around us with texts and music inspired by (and including) animal sounds. The various sections of the work were composed by Winter and Halley, but also by Jim Scott, Kim Oler and the wonderful percussionist Oscar Castro Neves.

I have some friends who are disturbed by the use of "Gaia" in the name of an overtly Christian work. Gaia is a name of a Greek goddess embodying the Mother Earth. I have no such qualms about the spirituality of the name. Saint Patrick wrote what amounts to a creed, wherein he states:

I bind unto myself today the virtues of the star-lit heaven

The glorious sun's life-giving ray, the whiteness of the moon at even,

The flashing of the lightning free, the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,

The stable earth, the deep salt sea around the old eternal rocks.

Clearly this is an acknowledgement of a deeply seated Christian belief that the earth is a part of the God-head.

Whether or not any one of you is a believer, you can revel in the music. The music brings to life the manner in which all aspects of the earth give praise to creation (and, if you are so inclined to believe it – the Creator). The

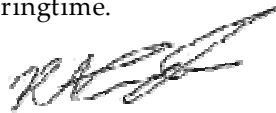
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style of the music is lively, energetic and full of praise. It is basically a Jazz mass, with piano, organ, percussion, solo voices, choruses, wolf sounds, bird sounds and whale songs. Unlike the last concert where the chorus sang, so wonderfully, the rich harmonies and comforting texts of "Ein Deutsches Requiem" by Johannes Brahms, the upcoming "Missa Gaia" will be exuberant and joyful. The remainder of the programme on the first weekend of June will be similar in the joy that we all feel with the coming of spring. Not only will we feel joy at the warmth of the sun returning, but we also remember the old adage that "In the spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love."

I hope to see you at one of those concerts. We have two of them for you, the first at St James's church in Simcoe and then again at St Pius's church in Brantford. Come and enjoy the music of springtime.



Richard Cunningham, Artistic Director
The Grand River Chorus

Concert Tickets

Adults.....	\$25
Seniors/PS Students.....	\$20
Children & H. S. Students with ID.....	\$5

Available

- In Brantford: *The Bookworm*, 331 Brant Ave.
- In Paris: *Green Heron Books*, 47 Grand River St. N.
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For information or tickets call 519 759-7885

We're on the Web:

www.grandriverchorus.com

Tickets can now be purchased online:

www.ticketscene.ca

grand river chorus

A Sneak Peek at our 2011-2012 Season

Ancient & Modern

Jephtha by Carissimi,
Requiem by Cunningham
October 30, 2011 3 pm
St. Basil's RC Church, Brantford

Onstage with the Guelph Symphony Orchestra

Sunday, December 11, 2011, 3 pm
River Run Centre, Guelph

*not part of our subscription series. Please visit
www.guelphorchestra.ca

Sing-a-long Messiah, by Handel

Friday Dec. 16, 7 pm
Heritage United Church, Brantford

Gospel Glory

Sunday April 1, 2012, 3 pm
St. Pius X RC Church, Brantford

Ode to Joy - Beethoven's Ninth

with the Brantford Symphony Orchestra
Sunday, May 6, 2012, 7:30 pm
Sanderson Centre, Brantford

*Not part of our concert series. Visit
www.brantfordsymphony.ca for tickets & information. *

Summertime

Friday June 1, 7:30 pm
St. James United, Simcoe
Saturday June 2, 7:30 pm
Hope Christian Reformed Church, Brantford



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the 2010-2011 season of the Grand River Chorus winds down, it is good to reflect on all the positive events of the past few months.

First of all, our Grand Fete du Vin was one of the best ever. The committee which organized the Fete, headed by Chair Susan Howe, did an amazing job! Calamus Wines were very well received and the Winery's support greatly appreciated. Best of all, the \$16,000 plus raised will help the Chorus to present great music to the community.

The Brahms Requiem was a joy to sing and this was reflected in a successful concert with an almost full house. Several dignitaries from the community were in attendance, and two representatives of the German Consulate in Toronto were well received. The "Chamber Chorus" did a wonderful job on the Liebeslieder by Brahms, and those of us not part of that group enjoyed listening to them along with the other members of the audience.

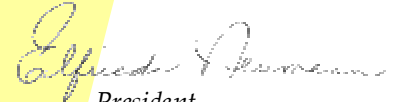
On April 30th the Newfoundland Kitchen Party, organized by the Fundraising Committee headed by chair Jim Dunning, was sold out! The "Jig's Dinner" was enjoyed by all as was the music of the band headed by Dave Jensen, organizer of Brantford's Open Stage monthly gatherings. Of course, who can forget the entertainment provided by members of the Chorus!

All of these events can only be presented and enjoyed because of the dedicated efforts of the volunteers of the Grand River Chorus, their family members and friends. We thank them once again.

I would like to pay tribute to one special volunteer who is hanging up her apron, so to speak. Rita Harmsen has been organizing the after-concert receptions for many years, preparing the coffee and setting out the cold drinks and goodies for both choristers and patrons to enjoy! Rita is retiring from this volunteer job, and we give her a great big thanks! Your shoes will be hard to fill, Rita!

The members of the Chorus are working hard at preparing the music for our final concert, "Songs for Springtime". We hope to see everyone out – and especially we hope for a strong contingent of supporters from the Norfolk area as we sing for the first time in St. James United Church in Simcoe.

Finally, since this will be my last article as President of the Chorus, I want to thank the hard-working board of the Grand River Chorus, as well as all the committee chairs, Artistic Director Richard Cunningham, Accompanist Ann-Marie McDairmid and all the choristers. You have made my job as President very easy!



President
The Grand River Chorus

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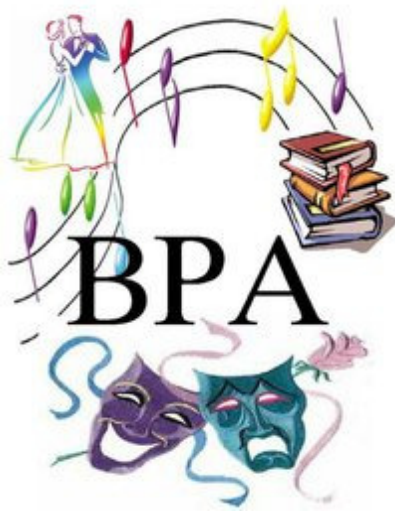
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**SEPTEMBER 24,
2011 SEASON
KICK-OFF!
JOIN US AT
THE LYNDEN
PARK MALL** for
the kickoff of our new
season. We will be
there all day with all
the groups from Brant
Performing Arts.
Come meet many
members of local
theatre, music and
performing arts

groups: enjoy some impromptu performances and pick up a season's subscription while you are there!

Newfoundland Kitchen Party – A Grand Success!

On April 30, at the Dunsdon Legion, two hundred attendees all became Newfoundlanders for a few hours of fun and frolic. A Newfoundland Boiled Dinner of corned beef, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, turnip, beans and all the fixin's was served out to the excited crowd by volunteers direct from Newfoundland!

A Newfoundland License Plate raffle was held and multiple prizes were awarded. A weekend getaway from Mac's Shacks on the shores of Lake Huron was raffled off as well. Door prizes were awarded to some lucky ticket holders.

The music for the evening was provided by Dave Jensen and The Witchsticks. They played Newfoundland music all night long with guitars and fiddles and squeeze boxes and keyboards. A musical interlude was provided by four brave volunteers from the GRC. Tim McDougald amazed the crowd with his guitar virtuosity and powerful voice. The Kin Sisters (*Jane Daw, Betty Decker and Lynda Newhouse*) wowed everyone with their ren-

In 2010 the City of Brantford arts community was chosen by an organization called **artsVest** to receive their support.

The members of this group are comprised of some of the largest corporations in Canada and they contribute to a financial pool to be used to promote the arts across the country. Arts groups can then apply for a portion of the allotment for their city. The Grand River Chorus applied and was approved as a recipient, with a specific dollar amount. The minimum amount of donation had to be \$500 from a first-time sponsor. When a donation of that amount is secured, and the paperwork is accepted, **artsVest** would match the donation. The GRC benefited from the program to the tune of just under \$6,000. The **artsVest** management team then came to Brantford and sponsored an evening to discuss with all of the groups participating the successes and challenges of the program. We hope Brantford is chosen again soon!

Terry Kowalski,
Sponsorship Officer

dition of "If I Was a Can of Tuna" (*Now available on YouTube*). Dave Dean got everyone up on their feet and led them in a rousing, hilarious rendition of three songs. Angie Esders led the room in a colourful choral collection of song.

The party-goers brought their own cutlery and left with it in their bags. The music played on until midnight and the GRC and guests had a fun time getting together socially with each other. Not sure who let those Newfoundlanders in the door but they were a ton of fun and now officially "Friends of the GRC!"

GRC President Elfrieda Neumann described the event as "a knockout!"

The eleventh annual Fête du Vin was another great success. The generosity of those who donated items for the auction, and the diligence of those who solicited them, resulted in a wide variety for both the live and silent auction. There was something for everyone. Reviews from many guests indicated that Calamus winery was a great choice. People enjoyed the music of the choir and particularly Al Newhouse and the Corner Pocket Trio. The venue at the Best Western and good food provided, proved, yet again, to be a great choice.

As in the past, the organizing committee considered feedback from guests, and planned this year's event accordingly. As one of the changes, it was decided to not auction off the major prize, which was the Via Rail Pass. Instead, Angie Esders initiated an elimination game, Heads and Tails, in which guests had to purchase a ticket in order to play. The grand winner was our very own Andy Blackwood. From the laughter during the game and the money raised, this game was extremely successful.



Gratitude goes to our new auctioneer, Rod Decker, who volunteered to replace long time auctioneer Walter Mercer. Reviews were quite favorable towards Rod and his auctioneering skills, his contribution was a special part of the evening. This was the first year that I have been on the organizing committee, and I have been

humbled by the enormous amount of work from the choristers, friends of the chorus, and especially the organizing committee, to help make this event our biggest fund raiser. The committee chairs for auction, wine, volunteers, program printing, and decorating worked above and beyond all expectations.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the guests, generous donors, volunteers and organizers who collectively made this Eleventh Annual Grand Fête du Vin a rousing success. As a result, this years proceeds to support future concerts are more than \$16,500.

The members of the committee and all the volunteers have been a great team.

Thank you all!

Susan Howe

Chair of the Eleventh Annual Grand Fête du Vin Organizing Committee

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Grand Fête du Vin
2011



THE VOICE OF THE GRAND RIVER CHORUS



THE GRAND RIVER CHORUS PRESENTS

Songs for Springtime

INCLUDING THE MISSA GAIA

Two opportunities, in 2 communities

Saturday June 4th, 2011, 7:30 p.m.

St James United Church, 203 John Street, Simcoe OR

Sunday June 5th, 2011, 3:00 p.m.

St Pius Roman Catholic Church, 9 Waverley Street, Brantford

TICKETS: Adults \$25., Seniors/PS Students \$20 Children and High School Students with ID \$5

AVAILABLE:

In Brantford: The Brantford Bookworm, 331 Brant Avenue
In Hamilton: The Westdale Bookworm, 852 King Street West
In Paris: Green Heron Books, 47 Grand River Street North
In Simcoe: Florian Clinic, 25 Colborne Street South
For information or tickets call 519-759-7885

Canadian composer Paul Halley has been to Brantford to perform with the Grand River Chorus. His setting of Seven Songs for Springtime and his Missa Gaia, co-written with Paul Winter, will form the centerpiece of this collage of music of all styles.

We shall celebrate the arrival of spring with music which will lift your spirits.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR Richard Cunningham
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR Cara Blackwood
ACCOMPANIST Ann-Marie MacDairmid



Email: grandriverchorus@rogers.com Website maintenance courtesy of Gary Dumbleton.

www.grandriverchorus.com Photo courtesy of Takacs Studios.

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Artistic Director

Richard Cunningham

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