

GRAND NOTES

THE VOICE OF THE GRAND RIVER CHORUS

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



As I sit listening to a wonderful recording of our concert of the Vespers of 1610 by Claudio Monteverdi, I am filled with a sense of real pride and great good fortune. The Grand River Chorus is a

fabulous choir- around seventy singers, served by a board of directors who share my vision to bring great music to Brantford and the surrounding area and who work diligently to achieve that goal.

Monteverdi wrote his Vespers four hundred years ago, probably in an effort to get a papal scholarship for his son, and the work was not performed until Monteverdi arrived at St Mark's in Venice in 1613. It may have been performed occasionally during his lifetime, but was then more or less forgotten until the resurgence of interest in Early Music which took place in the 1950s. The overall work is huge. Undertaking such a performance is colossal in scope, requiring a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes. There is the hiring of soloists and orchestral players (in this case, those who play unusual early instruments). There is the booking of an appropriate venue and moving in the risers along with seventy chairs, setting them up and taking them down more than once.

There is the editing of music (*Monteverdi didn't designate specific instruments for any given part*), choosing a portative organ and renting it, setting up the music stands and ensuring that there are enough lights for the stands. A programme must be made, which includes the running order, the programme notes, and advertising that others have sold to help pay for it all. People must be found to sell and take tickets, hand out programmes, give flowers to the soloists at the end of the show, and countless other small but important things which make the effort seem easy to the audience. Then, most importantly, the singers must learn the music, practising together to shape the phrases and sing with excitement, accuracy and understanding.

The thing that I enjoy most about working with the Grand River Chorus is that the individual members work hard to do their very best in whatever ambitious project is put in front of them. The Monteverdi Vespers project was one of the most extraordinary things that we have ever tackled. I doubt that it has ever before been performed here, and I am thrilled to hear the results. It was not a perfect performance – live music never is – yet the overall effect was celestial and somewhat overwhelming. The choir sang with articulation and energy, and created a wonderful atmosphere of beauty and grace.

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There are many exciting performances coming up for the Grand River Chorus. In December we have three performances; December 8th, two shows with Canadian tenor John McDermott at the Sanderson Centre, December 12th at the River Run Centre in Guelph, where we perform as guests of the Guelph Symphony Orchestra, and our Singalong Messiah performance at Heritage United Church on Sunday December 19th, where you get to be a member of the chorus for an evening. You won't want to miss our March 27th concert of Brahms's Requiem coupled with his Liebeslieder Waltzes. That will be a splendid concert at St Pius Roman Catholic Church. We finish our season this year with a terrific concert of music which will include the Missa Gaia by Paul Winter, Paul Halley and Jim Scott.

Conducting the Grand River Chorus, and working with all of the people who make things happen is a privilege, and I consider myself fortunate to work with the people in this organization. Allow me to take this opportunity to say thank you to all those who make this such a wonderful job.



Richard Cunningham, Artistic Director
The Grand River Chorus



The Grand River Chorus is pleased to congratulate Elfrieda Neumann on her appointment to the position of President of the Grand River Chorus Board of Directors. The Annual General Meeting of the Chorus members was held Saturday, 11 September 2010 at Central Baptist Church. Heartfelt Thanks were extended to immediate Past-President Dave Neumann, in appreciation of many successful years of leadership of the Grand River Chorus for other prestigious adventures. Thanks was also extended to Deirdre Meyer, who has stepped down from the Board of Directors.

Members of the Grand River Chorus installed a full slate of Directors which include: Elfrieda Neumann, (President), Monica Admiral, (1st V.P.), Jane Duncan, (2nd V.P.), David Johnston, (Treasurer), Betty Stephan (Secretary). Directors: Terry Kowalski, Laureen Maurizio, Robert Saunders, Jim Dunning, and Choir Representatives: Jane Daw, Pat Eyzenga and Marilyn Kowalski. Richard Cunningham remains Ex-Officio on the Board. A leadership workshop was held September 25th, led by consultant Nathan Garber.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe that two months have already gone by since our Annual General Meeting. The Grand River Chorus had a successful first concert – the Monteverdi Vespers – on October 30. We are now preparing for a very busy Christmas Season.

Now in its twelfth season the Chorus has grown both in numbers and in its musical ability. With growth, there are always challenges. One of the challenges has been to find the volunteers to do the work required to keep our growing organization on track.

We have been fortunate that there have always been willing volunteers from within the Chorus, to raise the money and do the many tasks required to promote the Chorus and the Concerts in the community.

As a Board, we must ensure that we do not burn out our volunteers.

To this end, we have applied for a grant to assist us with funding a part time administrator to help with some of the many tasks needed to ensure our Chorus is successful. This does not mean that we will not continue to need volunteers. We definitely will! To ensure continued success for the Chorus, we will need both. There are many tasks involved in ensuring that the Chorus continues to be well organized and that concerts run smoothly, not just with the music but with the many details in the front and back of the house.

I want to thank all those volunteers who helped in preparation for the first concert. In particular, I would like to thank Monica Admiral, our new vice-president, who stood in for me for most of the month of October when I was unable to work on Chorus tasks.

So a big salute to all the volunteers – choristers and others – who have worked hard over the past eleven years to ensure that the grand choral tradition of this community has continued.

President
The Grand River Chorus

OUR BUSINESS/CORPORATE SPONSORS

- Gary Dumbleton
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- Newhouse Graphics
- Riverview Terrace
- S.C. Johnson - Community Team
- Takacs Studios
- The Brantford Expositor

Brant Performing Arts Group

The first ever joint season launch of the Brant Performing Arts Group, held on Sunday, September 12, 2010 in Harmony Square in downtown Brantford, was a grand opportunity for performing arts groups to strut their stuff. Eleven organizations participated, with information tables, performances and even a trivia competition sponsored by Theatre Brantford. Stage Manager and MC was George Sanford.

All of the eleven groups encouraged the community to attend and support their concerts and performances for the 2010 – 2011 Season. Participating members included: Brant Belle-a-Deers, Brant Men of Song, Brantford Symphony Orchestra, the Brantford Music Club,



Brantford Opera Guild, Brant Taletellers, Grand River Chorus, ICHTHYS Theatre, Kiwanis Music Festival, Telephone City Musical Society and Theatre Brantford.

As a first-time venture, it was a successful working together of different arts groups, to help promote the arts cooperatively in our community. The group has decided to continue working together, seeking new opportunities to work together to promote our performances throughout the year in the Brantford area.

The Brant Performing Arts Group was formed following a one day workshop for performing arts groups in November, 2009. That workshop was sponsored by the Grand River Chorus, with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Expositor Newspaper on Thursday October 28th. While making arrangements for this advertising campaign, we have solidified corporate “in-kind” sponsorships with The Expositor and the two radio stations, thereby doubling our advertising dollars with them!

Thank you to all choir members who took time to distribute posters and sell tickets! All of this, and open doors, resulted in a wonderful audience who appreciated the effort taken to present our concert at St. Basil’s Church.

My goal this year is to broaden awareness of the Grand River Chorus and the fact that we bring beautiful music to people who may not ordinarily be afforded the opportunity to experience it. Music is, after all, an experiential outlet of creativity that is not just about the choir, but is participatory in nature. A great deal of the music we present has a spell-binding, healing and joyful nature which we share with our audiences.

Next up: A massive presentation of Handel’s Messiah Sing-a-long! Join me in challenging other church and community choirs to sing with us December 19th!

Who knew there were so many media personalities in Brantford and Brant County?

We are off to a big start this year, with great response to advertising done for the Monteverdi Vespers! Advertisements were seen in the Expositor, the Brant Connection and the Simcoe Reformer; heard on CKPC 92.1 and Easy 101.3; listed in event calendars with radio and tourism online event boards; listed in the Wholenotes Magazine. Richard Cunningham and Lauren Maurizio appeared on a live TV interview on Rogers ‘Inside Brant’ show on Monday October 25th and the Grand River Chorus was featured in an article in the Entertainment section of the



The Grand River Chorus is pleased to announce our **Eleventh Annual Grand Fête du Vin and Auction** to be held on **Saturday, February 26, 2011** at the **Best Western Brant Park Inn** in Brantford (403 & Gretzky Parkway). We are especially excited that our featured wines for tasting will be from **Calamus Estate Winery** from the Jordan wine-making region of Ontario.



“Working with the enthusiastic, creative and hard-working choristers and supporters of the Chorus as well as the generous representatives of Calamus, I am looking forward to yet another fine evening of fun and fundraising” enthuses Susan Howe, newly installed chair of the **Grand Fête du Vin** organizing committee. She emphasizes that the monies raised each year through this marvelous event are essential to funding the ongoing work of this fine musical ensemble. “Each year the standards we achieve musically are higher as our membership increases and Artistic Director Richard Cunningham continues to challenge us” observes Susan.

Plan to join us on February 26th as we explore quality Ontario wines, feast from a superb buffet table, enjoy music performed by Chorus members as well as our musical guests Corner Pocket and, of course, indulge in a friendly bidding war for intriguing auction items. Doors open at 5 P.M. for viewing of auction items; wine tasting will be at 6; the buffet will follow at 7:30. Tickets are available at \$65 per person by calling 519-750-0817.



Grand Fête du Vin 2011

February 26

Best Western Brant Park Inn

Life Goes On



Last year the Grand River Chorus toured parts of Europe, and

part of the success of that endeavor was the behind-the-scenes efforts of several of our members. They worked hard at raising money via community events, bulb sales, dinner raffles and the like. This fall, they remain a loose confederation of members, both choristers and non-choristers, still willing to do their part to help our choir raise extra funds. This group includes Jim & Joy Dunning, Alex & Joyce Morris, Pat Eyzenga and Jane Duncan, and they hope to add to their numbers this season. Along with a Cheese & Pasta sale (going on at the time of publication), other plans include Gourmet Dinner raffles and pub nights. The Fund Raising committee is a new one, which began as an ad hoc group for our last season only, and may continue to grow and become an official part of our organization. Anyone wishing to help the Grand River Chorus in this way is welcome to contact Joy Dunning 519-758-1835, Joyce Morris 519-759-4358.

Remaining 2010-2011 Concerts

2. Handel's Messiah - Singalong

Sunday December 19th, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.

Heritage United Church,
360 Colborne Street, Brantford

Soloists: Soprano - Heather Plewes, Countertenor – Richard Cunningham,

Tenor – Christopher Edwards, and Bass – John van Maanen.

This Christmas Classic is one which every person who loves to sing should attend.

Even if you prefer to listen and not take part, it is always great fun.

We have a

special guest coming to conduct the Hallelujah Chorus. Don't you

want to find out

who that will be?

3. Brahms: Ein Deutsches Requiem

Sunday March 27, 2011, 3:00 p.m.

St Pius Roman Catholic Church,
9 Waverly Street, Brantford

Soloists: Soprano - Leslie Bouza,
and Baritone - Jordan Stumpf

Brahms wanted to compose a Requiem-like work that was aimed more at calming

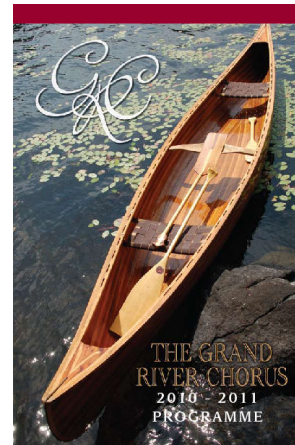
the minds of the people left here on earth. Thus, his German Requiem doesn't

speak to the fires of hell, but

rather "How lovely are your

dwelling's fair, O Lord

of Hosts."



4. Songs for Springtime - including the Missa Gaia

Two opportunities, in 2 communities

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

St James United Church,
203 John Street, Simcoe OR

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

St Pius Roman Catholic Church,
9 Waverly Street, Brantford

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.

For information or tickets call 519 759-7885

For the last ten years the choir has been fortunate to store its music in the basement of Riverview Terrace, Brantford, a local retirement home. The owners and staff of Riverview Terrace have been generous and hospitable in providing space free of charge for our ever expanding library of music. Last year during discussions about our strategic plan, we decided to seek another location preferably on the ground level and with a similar arrangement for easy access. After a brief search we approached the Minister and Board of Heritage United Church. We were able to secure a room at ground level within easy reach of Colborne Street and we were allowed to convert the room into our



new library facility. We installed new shelving and begged and borrowed a few filing cabinets from friends and members of the chorus. On October 18 three burly movers arrived at Riverview. In a little over three hours they took the music from the basement at Riverview (*no easy task*) and transferred it to Heritage.

The chorus would like to thank the owners and staff at Riverview Terrace for their generous and willing assistance during our ten years of occupancy. We would also like to thank David Dean for organizing the move, the Minister and members at Heritage for their wonderfully warm welcome. And finally, a tip of the hat must go to Cara Blackwood, our librarian, whose organizational skills and patient chiding ensure that the library functions consistently at a very high level.

Music on the Move



THE VOICE OF THE GRAND RIVER CHORUS

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Donor Organizations

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1st Vice President: Monica Admiral
2nd Vice President: Jane Duncan
Secretary, Betty Stephan
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Pat Eyzenga, *choir rep.*
Marilyn Kowalski, *choir rep.*
Laureen Maurizio,
Terry Kowalski
Jim Dunning
Robert Saunders

Ex-Officio Members

Richard Cunningham, *Artistic Director*

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We're on the Web:

www.grandriverchorus.com

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.
In Simcoe: *H-N Information Centre*, 46 Colborne St. S.
(in the Library)
In Hamilton: *The Westdale Bookworm*, 852 King St.
West

For information or tickets call 519 759-7885

