



Choruspondence

Memphis Symphony Chorus



December 2009

Martha Wesson, editor
Ginny Vann, associate editor

in this issue >>>

- Practice Tips*
- Fruit Sale Update*
- Holiday Pops Information*
- Rehearsal and Performance*
- Schedule*
- and more...*



Mei-Ann Chen conducts Beethoven's Fifth

Born in Taiwan, Mei-Ann Chen has lived in the United States since 1989. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of Michigan, where she was a student of Kenneth Kiesler. Prior to that, she was the first recipient in New England Conservatory's history to receive double master's degrees simultaneously in violin and conducting. The first woman to win the Malko International Conductors Competition (2005), Mei-Ann has established herself as a versatile, highly communicative and inspirational young artist. She is currently serving as the Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. She will conduct the MSO performing Beethoven's Fifth on November 21st.



Practice Tips By Mary Seratt

The Symphony Chorus is not just pretty good, it's darn good! We know that the difference between a pretty good performance and one that will wow the audience is attention to detail. Look through this issue for some suggestions on how to deal with those details.

Important Notes:



After the holiday pops there will be no rehearsals in December.

The delivery and pickup of fruit will be Dec. 11-13 at the scout hut behind Faith Christian Church-4965 Willow at Mt. Moriah.



Important! Rehearsal and Performance Schedule

- o 11/30/09 7:00 Balmoral Rehearsal with Conductor / Piano Rehearsal*
- o 12/1/09 7:00 Balmoral Makeup Rehearsal
- o 12/2/09 7:30 Cannon Center Rehearsal*
- o 12/3/09 7:00 Cannon Center Rehearsal*
- o 12/4/09 5:00 Main Library Parking Lot - Depart for Dyersburg Run-Out*
- o 12/5/09 7:15 Cannon Center Holiday Pops Concert*

* Required Attendance.

Fruit Sale Update!

Chorus Members,

If you haven't sold much fruit, it's time to get busy!! The last day to order fruit is Monday, November 23rd!! We have GREAT incentives for you this year - so the more you sell the more you get!!!



Top prizes include:

- Most boxes sold (Dinner at Folks Folly)
- Most Customers (Dinner at Jim's Place East)
- Most New Customers (Gold music stand from Amro)

Other incentives include:

Symphony Chorus embroidered shirts, leather notepads, flash drives, luggage tags, zingers, black sports bottles, & pens



Detail: I just can't look up! I'm afraid I'll lose my place in my music!

Solution: Take a chance! It's safer than a roller coaster and almost as thrilling to get out of your music and watch the conductor.

Try to visualize the page as you are looking up. That'll be easier if you've been marking your score because you'll be so familiar with it. The reward of being in sync with all the musicians on stage is worth getting out of your comfort zone. Besides, you can do it! You are part of the Symphony Chorus, and a fine musician.

Next Chorus Audition

JANUARY 4 , 6:00 PM
BALMORAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

To schedule an audition, contact Lisa at 678-5865, visit memphissymphonychorus.org, or call 537-2500

Detail: I just can't remember everything week to week.

Solution: You'll be surprised at what a difference 10 minutes with your music a day can make. Every one of us is a busy adult with adult responsibilities and you may even feel over-committed at times. But every one of us knows that a break in the day helps you come back thinking clearly and ready for more. Bring your music to work. Take 10 minutes at lunch time to look at one of the spots you've circled, or to read over tricky lyrics (Deck the [singular] hall, or falala,lalala, falala, lalala FOG!) You'll feel confident and prepared and not overwhelmed. (Co-workers will be jealous that you are so cool.)

Welcome New Members!

We welcome our newest members: Marisa Behan (soprano), Jan White (Barry's wife!), Tresea Wells, and Chandra Savage (all altos), and last, but certainly not least, Steve Broome (bass). We hope that you feel like chorus family by now. Just remember---you have been hand-picked and we are proud to have you with us. So, again, a very warm welcome from all of us!



Detail: I'll never remember all these breath marks and final consonants! I'm afraid that I'll be that extra T that sticks out in the near perfect acoustics at the Cannon Center (or worse, from the bleachers at Dyersburg State Community College!)

Solution: CHEAT! Well, not really. It is not cheating to pencil all over your score. Circle problem notes, draw in eyeballs to remind you to look up at tempo changes, put a big old slash at a note you're prone to hold too long to remind you to stop. Cross out places you don't sing, and draw arrows to places you do. Some even write in the counting on tricky measures. You'll be sure to cut off on 4 if you know just where 4 is!

Alastair Willis conducts Holiday Pops

Alastair Willis served as Resident Conductor of the Seattle Symphony from 2002-2003, after having held the post of Assistant conductor of that orchestra since September 2000. He previously held the position of Assistant conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras and Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra. Born in Acton, MA, Mr. Willis lived with his family in Moscow for five years before settling in Surry, England. He received his bachelor's degree with honors from England's Bristol University and continued his studies at Kingston University, where he earned a post-graduate Certificate of Education degree, teaching classroom music from grade-school to high-school levels.



Holiday Pops Singers:

Just a reminder that there are two opportunities for you to get some extra rehearsal time during the week of our performance. The first is the make-up rehearsal on Tuesday, December 1st at 7:00 at Balmoral. This rehearsal is required for anyone who has 3 absences, however the rehearsal is open to everyone and is a great way to review the music. So if you are free that evening, please join us for the make-up.

The other rehearsal is part of our **required** orchestra rehearsal on Wednesday, December 2nd. This is the first rehearsal at the Cannon Center, but we will not rehearse with the orchestra until about 8:45. However, our call is at **7:30** that evening and we will use the first hour and 15 minutes of our time reviewing all the choral parts. We will then rehearse with the orchestra until about 10:00 pm.

Important Information for Dyersburg Trip:

- Transportation
 - Buses will be available in the Central Library parking lot at 3030 Poplar Avenue
 - They will leave at 5:00 pm sharp on Friday December 4th
 - If you want to drive on your own, directions are below
 - Box dinners and drinks will be provided on the buses
- Call is 7:00 pm in warm-up area in Dyersburg - be dressed in concert attire
- Concert Attire
 - Women: Long black chorus dresses; no sparkling or dangling earrings
 - Men: Tuxedos with *red* tie and *red* cummerbund
- Personal Hygiene
 - Please be courteous of those around by
 - Avoiding colognes and perfume
 - Paying attention to bad breath

Directions to Dyersburg State Community College

- Take Route 51 North from Memphis towards Dyersburg
- Turn right onto Route 78 once in Dyersburg
- Turn left onto Parkview Street, following the signs to the gymnasium
- Turn left into the third driveway and follow it to the gymnasium

Special Thanks!

To our Director, Larry, for his dedication to the Memphis Symphony Chorus. Thanks for inspiring us to be better.

To our President, Lisa, for her tireless efforts to keep us on track.

To Liz for sharing her excellent musical talents with us and her great attitude at rehearsals.

To Jeremy for sharing his charming director skills with us recently. GREAT JOB!!!

To MSC board members for your willingness to serve and for doing a fantastic job.

To Linda and Bill for the enormous amount of work they do with the Fruit Sale each year.

TO EVERY MEMBER FOR MAKING THIS A GREAT CHORUS.



Detail: Those harmonies are just hard!

Solution: Use the practice tracks or CD's and take a minute with your piano (or tuba, cello, or piccolo) and play your part. Most of our notes aren't really out of the blue- someone in the accompaniment or another choral part has probably just played or sung it! Find that note, circle it, and draw an arrow to your note- you'll feel much better and ready to come in on time.