

Cantiamo 2012-13 Mid-Season Newsletter



March 2013

Volume 2, Issue 1

Welcome!

Welcome to Cantiamo's first newsletter of the year. In this newsletter you will learn the early history of the choir as told by Jackie. She will also share some insights on the value of mentoring in her article "Mentoring — Another Layer of Choral Experience." We have a new column in which we follow the news from one of our former choristers. We have an update about

Cantiamo's trip to Festival 500 in Newfoundland and another about the donations and support that Cantiamo gratefully receives. There is a surprising story from our seamstress, Maureen, about music mischief and redemption. Finally, a handy sheet with our upcoming events, perfect for your refrigerator!

—The Cantiamo Executive

Cantiamo Celebrates Ten Years!

Inside this Issue:

Mentoring	2
Once a Cantiamo Girl	3
Cantiamo's Trip to Festival 500	3
A Song for Anopheles Mosquito	4
An Update on Donations	5
Celebrating Our Anniversary Year	5
Update from Choir Manager	7
Upcoming Events	8



Photo credit: James Caswell, 2013

Cantiamo Girls receiving coaching from composer Jonathan Willcocks during a workshop at Ottawa University

"If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music."

— Albert Einstein

Mentoring – Another layer of choral experience

by Jackie Hawley, Choir Director

Mentoring is one of the major areas of focus for Cantiamo, beginning with the Training Choir. The more-experienced girls of the main choir are invited to be mentors to the younger, less-experienced singers of the Cantiamo Training Choir (TC). These mentors attend the TC rehearsal each week and are assigned a seat next to a chorister who is in need of individual guidance.

Before the first rehearsal, mentors are given a brief overview of their role. As the year goes on, I direct the mentors as needed. Mentors support the TC choristers by listening to them sing and determining what the issues are and how best to address them. Mentors observe posture and gently remind the younger choristers how to sit or stand. Mentors also create a comfort level for the new singers by building relationships. As you can see, the mentors do much more than "just sing along with the TC."

Usually, the TC choristers need help to organize their music and follow their scores. Many of the new TC choristers have never seen a choral score and it is part of their training to develop musical literacy. Mentors guide the choristers and help them to focus attention on the score rather than just listening to learn the pieces by rote. Mentors also demonstrate proper posture, how to follow the conductor, and healthy vocal technique.

Because the mentors are older, more experienced singers with a more developed instrument (voice), they must take care not to vocally overpower the TC choristers. The mentor voices are a guide and are meant to be heard by the TC choristers as examples of healthy, properly-produced tone that should be imitated. The TC choristers tend to sing out more confidently when they hear a confident voice beside them.

Having the mentors' support creates a safety zone for the new singers. It is especially helpful to have mentors next to those choristers who have difficulty matching pitch. The mentor can sing close to the ear of the chorister and can also use hand gestures to help indicate that their voice needs to move to a different place to match with the other choristers. The TC rehearsal is only 45 minutes per week so it is valuable to have mentors help these new choristers within the context of rehearsal, so that the rest of the group can keep working on other skills.

Mentors assist by demonstrating repertoire. Sometimes they are asked to sing in harmony with TC thus allowing the young choristers to experience the sound of a second or third part. And, mentors are used for leading sections in rounds, which helps develop the aural skills of the TC members more quickly.

Continued on page 6

"Creating an environment of collaboration and mutual support can only enhance the beauty of the music and the people in our choirs."

—Jackie Hawley



A Special Training Choir Festival

Sunday, April 28th

Workshop: 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Concert: 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm

Trinity United Church



Cantiamo Training Choir, Goulbourn Junior Jubilees, Chelsea Youth Chorus, and Cross Town Youth Chorus. Families and friends are invited to attend the finale concert.



Cantiamo Girls Choir and Training Choir mentoring students and school choir on school tour day.

Photo credit: Jane Pickett, 2012

Once a Cantiamo Girl, always a Cantiamo Girl!

A new column featuring updates from former Cantiamo girls
by Sarah Burnell

Since 'graduating' from Cantiamo seven years ago, I've made my home in Montreal. There, I studied Music Education and Education at McGill University, and received my bachelors' degrees in June 2011. While I was in university I studied violin with Richard Roberts and voice with Madeleine Palmer. Upon arriving in Montreal, I started up my own choir, the Siamsa Singers, which focuses on Irish, Celtic, and Folk repertoire in SATB voicing. I've continued to sing in choirs, first with La Ceilagh and now with Seraphim.

I teach music at two elementary schools in Montreal, Terry Fox School and Wilder Penfield School. I love teaching elementary school because my students are just 'meeting' music for the first time. Their enthusiasm is a constant inspiration! This summer I am getting married to my very musical fiancé, Erick (on the left).



Cantiamo's Trip to Festival 500 in Newfoundland

by Kate Batty — Anniversary coordinator



On July 3rd, 2013 the Cantiamo Girls Choir heads out to Newfoundland to participate in the Festival 500 Choral event. Eight years ago Cantiamo attended the Festival and so we are very excited to return to this special Festival as part of our 10th Anniversary celebrations.

Festival 500 "Sharing the Voices" is a non-competitive, international festival for invited choirs. This year there are choirs from Ireland, South Africa, Greece, Tanzania, United States and from many provinces across Canada. This one-week event gives choirs the opportunity to perform and participate in various concerts, workshops, clinics and master classes delivered by amazing talent around the world. Guest artists this year come from Belgium, United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Finland and Canada!

Our choir of 29 girls (including 2 Cantiamo Alumni) will fly from Ottawa to Halifax and then journey on to St. John's in time for the opening ceremonies. They will be accompanied by Cantiamo's artistic leaders, Jackie and Laura Hawley along with 5 parent chaperones. The choristers will stay for the week in a Memorial University residence and will be shuttled to and from activities by the event organizers.

Midway through the festival we will have half a day to venture out beyond St. John's. We will travel down to Bay Bulls to go whale and bird watching in the famous Witless Bay Nature reserve. Our tour guide is known to have local music playing on the boat so you can just imagine the girls raising their voices in song and dancing the jig on their way out to see the whales and the puffins.

Our week will end with the Grand Finale – Vocal Fireworks. There will be 1,000 or more singers accompanied by a full symphony orchestra singing together in harmony. This will be something that our Cantiamo girls will remember for the rest of their lives!

Thanks to our chaperones, LaVonne Venables, Jane Pickett, Michelle Soldaat and Mike Holmes, for agreeing to take care of the girls during the week of travel. There will be a parents meeting for the trip in June, so stay tuned for more details.



Song for the Anopheles Mosquito

A story from Maureen Russell as told by Julie Gourley

Maureen Russell has been the dressmaker for Cantiamo since the inception of the choir. Ten years ago, when she heard that Jackie was planning to start a choir, she eagerly volunteered to make beautiful fitted dresses for the choristers. It was a tremendous undertaking, and today we are still blessed by her generosity and skill. This fall I had the pleasure of getting to know Maureen a little better. She is quite a storyteller, and she gave me permission to share this story.

Thank you, Maureen, for your tremendous support over our 10 years!

When Maureen was in grade ten biology, she had to study the lifecycle of the Anopheles Mosquito for a province-wide exam. She attended a Catholic, private, all-girls school in Winnipeg, and was in the Latin and Music class — in her words "the school nerds."

The girls studied together but found it challenging to memorize all the terminology for this little mosquito. Since they were mostly music students, they did what music students do best; they put the lifecycle to music! By the time the exam came, they answered all the questions with the help of the music running through their minds.

Shortly after the exam, the girls of the Latin and Music class were called to the biology classroom. In the room, sat the principal, the biology teacher, and two men in suits all looking very serious. The biology teacher began to speak, but the principal, who was a nun, curtly cut in, and said "We know you cheated. We just want to know how you did it." The girls were dumbfounded. They were the "goody-two-shoes." The teacher explained that all their answers had the same wording and even the same mistakes. They must have cheated.

One of the girls figured it out, and she started to hum their Anopheles Mosquito song. The other girls got it and they joined in. The biology teacher started beaming, and the principal shook her head and said "I should have known." The girls marks and honour were restored.



Photo credit: Julie Gourley, 2013

Cantiamo
Girls Choir of Ottawa

And The Cantiamo Training Choir

10th Anniversary Concert

Saturday, June 8, 2013
7:00 pm

Dominion-Chalmers United Church
355 Cooper Street

Adults: \$15, Family: \$35
Seniors/Students/Alumni: \$10

Tickets at the door or by contacting
info@cantiamogirlschoir.ca

Thank You from Cantiamo!

Cantiamo is supported by the generosity of volunteers — both parents of choristers and community members.

In this 10th anniversary year, we would like to thank the members of our 10th Anniversary Committee (Kate Batty, Jackie Hawley, Anne Troise, Carlo Verdicchio, Linda Crawford, LaVonne Venables, and Michelle Soldaat) for giving of their time and expertise to help with the planning of the new CD, the trip to Festival 500 in Newfoundland in July, and the 10th Anniversary Concert at Dominion-Chalmers United Church on June 8th. We are very fortunate to have such a skilled, experienced and knowledgeable group making our preparations!

Jane Pickett, Choir Manager

"What great role models the volunteers are for the choristers on how to get involved in your community and make a difference."

Lois McEachern, Megan Batty's grandmother

2013 – Celebrating our Anniversary Year

by Jackie Hawley, Choir Director

As you all know, 2013 is the 10th anniversary of the Cantiamo Girls Choir of Ottawa. For those of you who are new and do not know the history, here is a brief summary.

In June, 2003, I resigned from my previous choir and intended to take a year off after having conducted choirs for nearly 20 years. In August 2003, composer James Wright contacted me looking for a choir to sing his piece *If I Were the Moon* (text by Canadian author Sherri Fitch who was keynote speaker) at the Ottawa Writer's Festival. I told Dr. Wright that I did not have a choir at the time, so he suggested we each call some choristers that we knew and have them get together for a couple of rehearsals to sing this piece and two pieces from Dr. Wright's *Gallery of Song*. We each called some girls and ended up with a group of 21 choristers who were excited to be part of this event.

We had a successful rehearsal and a very successful performance! Much to my surprise, when I arrived home later that day, there was an invitation on my answering machine from the Ottawa Citizen for us to sing at their Raise a Reader breakfast at 6:00am in the morning at City Hall. I put this request out to the group and once again, these choristers enthusiastically accepted this invitation! Directly after this, came an invitation for us to sing at the Congress Centre for the National Volunteer Awards. It was at this point that a decision had to be made as to whether I would take my "year off" or whether this choir was "meant to be". It was impossible to resist the enthusiasm of the choristers, the invitations from the community, and the requests from the parents, and thus, Cantiamo was born! In the 2012 – 2013 season we celebrate our 10th anniversary!



Now we are well into our anniversary year and Cantiamo is busy preparing for our special 10th year celebrations.

The 10th Anniversary Concert will take place on Saturday, June 8th in beautiful Dominion-Chalmers United Church. We are also looking forward to singing once again with our Cantiamo alumni who will be invited to sing some pieces with the current choir in our anniversary concert. We will look forward to singing chorister favourites from the past 10 years as well as premiering a new work by composer James Wright and another by Jussi Chydenius, one of our friends from Rajaton! Another good friend of Cantiamo, Kathy Armstrong will lead us drumming and dancing in Gahu and the Cantiamo Training Choir will make a cameo appearance too!

Plans are in the works to create a double CD which will include recordings from past years of Cantiamo as well as a live recording of the Gala 10th Anniversary concert. We now also have a commemorative 10th Anniversary pin that will go to all alumni, past and future. Presentation of this pin, at the door of our concerts, will allow alumni a discounted ticket price when attending Cantiamo concerts. Once a Cantiamo girl – always a Cantiamo girl!

Having been accepted to Festival 500, plans are well underway for the Cantiamo trip to Newfoundland from July 3 to 11. Check out www.Festival500.com for more details. Participating in this festival in our 2004 - 2005 season was the first big event taken on by the original choir and we want to celebrate by feeling the thrill of being a part of this fantastic experience in Newfoundland once again!

It is definitely something to celebrate that the Cantiamo Girls Choir of Ottawa has been going strong for 10 years! We have continued to learn and grow and share ourselves with our community. In turn, we have been well received and generously supported, appreciated and encouraged. We look forward to many more years of *Music, Leadership and Outreach* with the Cantiamo Girls Choir of Ottawa! Happy 10th Anniversary!

The original group of choristers along with some of the Gallery of Song poets, composer James Wright (back row near right side) and poet Sherrie Fitch (center).



Photo credit: Unknown, 2003

Mentoring - (continued from page 2)

In performance, the mentors sometimes, but not always, sing with the TC. This depends on repertoire, the age mix of the TC, the acoustic of the venue, and the purpose of the performance. Mentors help line up and focus the TC and lead them on and off stage. I like to use mentors along with parent volunteers, because the mentors have a relationship with the TC choristers, are familiar with performance skills, and can demonstrate this to the TC with calm confidence and poise.

In a season where there are some very experienced mentors, I will invite mentors to be an apprentice conductor or accompanist. The apprentice conductors are responsible for studying the score, creating a rehearsal plan and teaching the piece completely on their own from start to performance. The apprentices receive written feedback from me and our accompanist so that they can reflect on their experience and incorporate constructive advice into their next rehearsal. This demonstrates to the TC that the mentors are also learning and willing to place themselves in a challenging position in order to develop their own skills.

Mentoring is also important within the Cantiamo Girls Choir, when TC choristers move up in to the main choir. This is a very big jump and can be overwhelming for new choristers. Each new chorister is assigned a mentor who helps with finding music in the large pile of repertoire, score marking, focus, and vocal support. The mentors give me updates on how the new choristers are doing and if they may need some

individual attention from me. The mentors also make sure that at choir social events the new choristers are included and warmly welcomed as part of the group.

Finally, both Cantiamo Girls Choir and Training Choir mentor outside of the organization. For example, our annual school tour connects the Cantiamo choirs with school choirs for a mini-workshop, short rehearsal, and a massed performance for their school. We go into schools and have the school choir mix in with our choristers so that the school choristers can feel what it is like to sing in a large group of trained voices. When the Cantiamo choristers sing a descant over the school choir, it is fun to see the school choristers' eyes light up in amazement. It is always an inspiring day for all involved.

Mentoring not only benefits the less experienced chorister but is also very valuable to the experienced chorister. It is empowering to realize one's wealth of knowledge (even at a young age) and be able to impart it to others. They learn to listen reflectively and be proactive in working towards artistic depth. Creating an environment of collaboration and mutual support can only enhance the beauty of the music and the people in our choirs.

"It is empowering to realize one's wealth of knowledge and to be able to impart it to others."

—Jackie Hawley

— Jackie Hawley

Would you like to contribute to the next newsletter? We are looking for short articles (< 300 words), reflections on a performance or choir experience, photographs, crossword puzzles made from lyrics, etc. We would also appreciate your favourite choir photographs for the 10th Anniversary Celebration. Please contact info@cantiamogirlschoir.ca



Performing "Maid on the Shore" at the International Women's Day event in Ben Franklin Place.

Update on Donations

by Jane Pickett, Choir Manager

At Cantiamo we continue to be blessed by the generous giving of our member families. They give their time, talents and money to help keep the events and organization running smoothly. Monetary donations help our organization, our choristers and our community and usually break down into three categories: Music Library Donations, United Way Donations through employer deduction programs and direct donations from family, friends, businesses and admirers in the community. As a registered charity we are able to provide charitable receipts to donors.

Last year, in our 2011-2012 season, we received a total of \$4,460.50 in donations compared to \$2,467.50 so far this season. These figures are generous and we thank everyone who has donated this year and last year. It is part of what makes Cantiamo such a special organization. Usually our General Donations go toward operating expenses and help us meet the mission and objectives of Cantiamo but this year most of our General Donations were directed toward fundraising for our upcoming trip to Festival 500 in Newfoundland. Some local businesses have become sponsors of Cantiamo and will have their names included in our choir concert programmes to acknowledge their support. Our Music Library donations numbers are very similar to last year's donations. Donations to our Music Library allow the donor to select existing or "on order" music and have it dedicated to someone special. These donations can even go toward commissioning new music. Each time the selected piece is sung by Cantiamo in a concert, the dedication is noted in the accompanying programme. It is a great way to pay tribute to a loved one!

Not only are we thankful this year for donations from our Cantiamo community, but we are also very appreciative of the support we have received from the Community Foundation of Ottawa (CFO) who are supporting our three part outreach program (Teacher Workshop, School Tour, Music Monday). We are in the second year of this multi-year grant program. This program is giving in so many ways; it is giving to Ottawa educators, to Ottawa school children, and to our choristers who are learning the value of mentoring and giving back to the community.

If you would like to inquire further about donations, please contact Jane Pickett at manager@cantiamogirlschoir.ca.



Visit Cantiamo's website and check out the on-line calendar for up-to-date information about events. Login to the Members Area.

www.cantiamogirlschoir.ca

Advertise in our 10th Anniversary programme

Cantiamo is seeking businesses that would like to advertise in our special, full-colour, 10th Anniversary programme.

A business-card sized advertisement is \$50. If you are a business owner or know one who would be interested, more information is available from the choir manager, Jane Pickett at manager@cantiamogirlschoir.ca.



Laura playing at the Jonathan Willcocks Workshop

Upcoming Events

Cantiamo 2012-2013 Mid-Season Newsletter



School visit in 2012 at Manor Park Public School

Training Choir Festival
Sunday, April 28th, 1:00 pm to 5:15 pm
 Trinity United Church

School tours
Friday, April 12th - all day

In this annual event, TC and CGC visit three or four schools in the Ottawa area to work with school choirs and practice the Music Monday songs. A bus will be rented and will depart from Trinity United Church. Stay tuned for details.

10th Anniversary Concert

Saturday, June 8th, 7:00 pm
 Dominion-Chalmers United Church

Ottawa Valley Music Festival

Sunday, June 23rd
 Eganville

Parent Wine and Cheese

Sunday, April 7th, 2:00 to 5:00 pm

Jackie's House, 80 Pentland Place, Kanata

All parents of the CGC and the TC are welcome to come and socialize. Bring a favourite beverage or nibbly to share. Fun and informal!

Music Monday

for TC and CGC

Monday, May 6th, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

National Arts Centre and Ottawa City Hall

For those who are new to the choir, Music Monday is a nation-wide event that promotes music education. In Ottawa, school and other youth choirs meet at the NAC to practice a selection of songs under the direction of Jackie. The choirs then walk a short distance to Ottawa City Hall for a 1:00 pm concert in which they sing simultaneously with choirs in other places all across Canada. More details will follow. Check out www.musicmakesus.ca.

CGC in Concert with the Kanata Choral Society

Saturday, May 11

St. Paul's Anglican Church, Kanata

20 Young Road

More details will follow.

Photo credits: (TL) Jane Pickett, 2012, (BL) James Caswell 2013, (BR) Julie Gourley 2013.



Listen-Up with Gryphon Trio

May 27, 28 and 29

Listen-Up is an educational outreach project in collaboration with the world-renowned group, Gryphon Trio



Music Monday 2012 in Ottawa City Hall

Volume 2, Issue 1