

hitting the high Notes.

A Newsletter From  WILLIAMSPORT
CIVIC CHORUS

Volume 17, No. 1 Sept., 2014
Barbara Hemmendinger, editor

Spooky Themes Usher in New Concert Season

The Williamsport Civic Chorus opens its season on Sunday, October 19th with a family concert called *Ghoultide Scarols*. Written by composer Thomas Pavlechko of Austin, Texas, the twelve "scarols" are clever arrangements of familiar Christmas carols transposed to minor keys and peppered with appropriately modified lyrics.

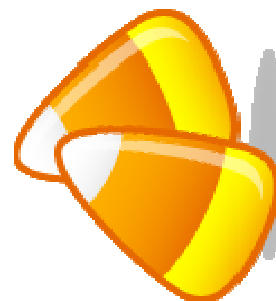
Besides song, our program will also feature Mrs. Denise Connor's highly acclaimed Montoursville Area High School drama students as they perform Halloween-themed fare. Can you guess which Shakespearean tragedy the students will partially enact? Kelsey Dowling, a Montoursville senior and runner-up in the regional Poetry Out Loud competition, will also recite "The Raven" by Edgar Allen Poe.



So, for haunted memories and a generally fun time, we invite you and your hobgoblins to come to *Ghoultide Scarols* at 3 pm, October 19th, at the Andrew G. Curtin Intermediate School, 85 Eldred Street, Williamsport. Just imagine the spooky surprises that await your presence.

Tickets may be purchased at Robert M. Sides Family Music Center, the Otto Book Store, from Chorus members, and at the door. Advance purchases receive a \$2 discount off the box office prices

of \$12 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. Children ages 12 and under are admitted free with a ticketed adult. 🎵



Singers' Corner

Have you ever thought about how the vocal instrument works? The human voice organ consists of three aspects: power supply (lungs), oscillator (vocal folds), and resonator (vocal tract) to produce sound waves in a variety of complex pat-

terns. The sound generated by the airstream chopped by the vibrating vocal folds is called the voice source. It is the raw material of both speech and song. Each musical sound is comprised of a fundamental frequency or pitch and a large number

of overtones. Its beauty results from the combination of vocal-fold vibration and the way the sound-waves are shaped as they move through the vocal tract and out of the mouth.

(Continued on page 4)



Ned's Notes...



Halloween has always been a holiday filled with mystery, magic, and superstition. It began as a Celtic end-of-summer festival about 2,000 years ago. The Celts celebrated their new year on November 1st, marking the end of summer, the harvest, and the beginning of dark, cold winter. October 31st was celebrated as Samhain (pronounced sow-in) when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth, causing trouble and damaging crops. By 43 A.D. the Roman Empire had conquered most of the Celtic territory and combined Samhain with two Roman festivals – Feralia, a day late in October when the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead; and Pomona, the celebration of the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple, which is

probably where the tradition of “bobbing” for apples began. In the 8th century, All Martyrs Day was expanded to include all saints as well, and Pope Gregory III moved the commemoration to November 1st. All-hallows Eve (eventually Halloween) was celebrated on the eve of All Saints Day and found itself mixed with Samhain traditions.

Here in the United States, Halloween festivities were slow to catch on, especially in the northeastern states due to that region’s Puritan beliefs, but by the second half of the nineteenth century celebrating Halloween had become widespread. By 1900, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers than about ghosts, pranks, and witchcraft. Today it is a secular, community-centered event. Indeed, we Americans spend an estimated \$6 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country’s second largest commercial holiday.

That fun and family-centered holiday is what we will be celebrating on October 19th. The Chorus will present *Ghoultide Scarols*, a collection of Christmas carols in the minor mode with Halloween words, embedded in a narrative poem entitled “’Twas All Hallows Eve.” We will be assisted by drama students from Montoursville High School who will read not only the poem, but also share scary and mysterious Halloween-themed classical literature. We hope you will join

us; we will try not to scare you too much, as we are much more interested in a singing good time!

“Ned’s Notes” is provided for the enjoyment of our readers by Ned Wetherald. Currently in his eighteenth year as music director of the Williamsport Civic Chorus, Ned is minister of music at State College Presbyterian Church. He holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music and choral conducting from Shenandoah University.



“This performance is supported in part by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.”

Patrons Reminder

The Civic Chorus patron campaign is underway. You can now make those very important contributions by mail at P.O. Box 752, Williamsport, PA 17703, or on our website using PayPal. Thank you!

PayPal[™]

Visit us:
williamsportcivicchorus.org

Find us on
Facebook

Montoursville H.S. collaboration



Michaela Way,
Shakeea Horn,
Delrae Kinney,
Sara Beckman,
Sara Peterson,
Tina Schulte,
Ashley Bastian,
Mary Strein,
Emily Fravel,
Elizabeth Bowman
Jenny Twardowski,
and Meghan Pfaff.

Chorus membership is open to people of all ages, high school through retirement, who love to sing. Singers commit to learning their parts and to attending regular rehearsals. In turn, they often develop ongoing friendships, camaraderie, and the well-being that occurs from a job well done. We look forward to welcoming newcomers to sing with us this year, which will specially mark Music Director Ned Wetherald's retirement. 🎵

The Williamsport Civic Chorus has long fostered collaborations with other community institutions in the arts, education, and even human services. We also frequently gear programming to children and families, both to entertain and to encourage the appreciation of fine music.

In October, the Chorus will partner with Montoursville Area High School staff and students in poetry readings and live drama that will give exuberance to our Halloween-focused concert. The students are directed and nurtured by their teacher, Mrs. Denise Connor, who is herself a talented singer, choir director, and drama coach who most recently appeared in "Oliver" at the Community Theatre League.

In addition to Kelsey Dowling who received accolades for Poetry Out Loud (see page 1), the other students who will perform with us on October 19th are:

Welcome to our new Rehearsal Accompanist!

Hannah Halter, a senior at Lycoming College, has accepted the position of rehearsal accompanist. Originally from Warriors Mark, PA, Hannah is the granddaughter of former Music Director Paul Ziegler, who served the Chorus from 1966-78. With piano and literary interests, Hannah is a "natural" for the Chorus family.

71st SEASON

Ghoultime Scarols

Sunday, Oct. 19, 2014
3 pm

Curtin Intermediate School
85 Eldred Street, Williamsport

Praise Parisienne

Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014
3 pm

Covenant-Central Presbyterian Church
807 W. Fourth St., Williamsport

A Cloud of Witnesses

Sunday, Apr. 26, 2015
3 pm

St. Mark's Lutheran Church
142 Market St., Williamsport





“The Williamsport Civic Chorus is an open community of singers dedicated to making fine music accessible to all through education, participation, and inspiration.”

(Continued from page 1)

Musical sounds possess three distinct properties: pitch (vibratory frequency), amplitude (loudness), and timbre (tone quality or color).

Frequency. If we sing a4, our vocal folds are vibrating at 440 cps, or cycles per second. Pitch is directly proportional to the speed of vibration; think of a plucked string or rubber band oscillating.

Amplitude or loudness is the magnitude of movement of a vibrating object. When we sing *forte*,

more of the vocal folds should vibrate. When we sing falsetto, only the fringes of the vocal folds vibrate. Loudness is measured in decibels. The sound of a jet plane taking off is usually around 120 DB, and a soprano singing c6 at 1046 cps is around 100-105 DB!

Timbre is what distinguishes one specific sound from other instruments, even when they are singing or playing the same pitch. It is determined by the fundamental frequency and overtones or partials. In all classical singing, some overtones exhibit

much more acoustic energy than the fundamental pitch. This plus a singer's ability to adjust the shape of the vocal tract makes it possible for a soloist to be heard, unamplified, over an orchestra.

Physics aside, our musicality as singers still derives much more from our knowledge, ability, and musical instinct rather than from the anatomy of the lungs and vocal tract. 