

# ENSEMBLE BULLETIN

The Voice of the Choral Art Form In Southwest Florida



**HELLO OUT THERE**

I'm Barney, the Bulletin Smiley and I'm gonna be bringing you choral stuff all summer while Ensemble newsletter is off.

©

May 2012

**D**uring the summer months Ensemble newsletter is not published but Barney will keep you abreast of choral happenings and events through this periodic bulletin and through our website...

[www.ensemblemedia.org](http://www.ensemblemedia.org)

Typically what we'll cover in the bulletin is short bursts of information and news that we think will be of interest to you

Most organizations are preparing for next season and we encourage them to send us the season schedules and plans early to assure they are included in our calendar and the newsletter for our September season kickoff issue.

We're already hearing from groups with some exciting plans for next season and many of them have their entire season already set and committed.

Now that's good management!

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## **Nancy Cobb-Lippens joins Ensemble as a contributing writer.**



Currently head of the music school at Indiana State University, Dr. Nancy Cobb Lippens is a recognized

national authority on the choral art form. Formerly founding Director of the Bower School of Music at FGCU she is well known in local music circles. She served four years as artistic director of the Fort Myers Mastersingers and is credited with the musical success of that group. She holds a Bachelor of Music with Honors in Theory and Composition from Oklahoma Baptist University, Master of Music in Composition from Michigan State University and a Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition from the University of Oklahoma. She also completed post-doctoral studies in choral conducting at the Eastman School of Music. She has composed a number of major choral works.

## **Naples Phil Chorale and Ave Maria Choir collaborate.**

Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* remains one of the most popular pieces of the classical music repertoire. Audiences will have another opportunity to hear it when the Naples Phil Chorale and Ave Maria Choir join the Naples Philharmonic Orchestra to present this magnificent piece next season, March 14-16, 2013.

## **New addition to website**

Our website now includes links to most of the choruses in southwest Florida including the university choruses. To complete the circle, post us as a link on your website.

## **Barney's other topics this Issue**

### **Page 2 There's more**

- Review— Bach B Minor Mass
- Review—BIG Arts Community Chorus
- Review \_ Back to Beethoven

### **Page 3 and More**

- A Trio of Ensembles

### **Page 4 And finally**

- Key Chorale Promotion
- Choruses contribute

# There's more!



I'm Benny and

Beginning next season we are considering a plan to collaborate with a panel of "Reviewers," individuals who will be willing to attend concerts and provide their insight on the performance for publication in the newsletter and on our website. Although reviews are just one person's opinion, we believe it will add an interesting dimension since it is rare that local media provide reviews on choral events. During the summer months we'll be talking with possible candidates and will make the final decision in late summer

Several concerts took place in the past couple of months that Ensemble had an opportunity to attend. Sadly, we did not have the mechanism in place to attend all concerts. There were just too many crammed into a short time period.

The following concerts that were attended stand out, however.

## Bach Ensemble

Our bias shows through with the first choice being the Bach B Minor Mass by the Bach Ensemble in Naples (March 9).

This work has always topped the list of all-time favorites not only for the beauty of it but for the sheer complexity. Artistic Director Dr. Ronald Doiron brought his chorus to new heights with their discipline, musicality and energy. It is a difficult work to sing by any measure, requiring a high level of concentration by the chorus and the ensemble rose to the challenge. Dr. Doiron's passion for the piece was reflected throughout in his skillful conducting of chorus, orchestra and soloists. The opening measures of the Kyrie were especially powerful in that all eyes in the chorus were focused on the conductor rather than on the music



Doiron

page. It was a subtle signal that we were in for a treat. The Cum Sancto Spiritu, in particular, was extremely moving and demonstrated the level of voice blending that this group could achieve. They had polish, weight and richness.

Doiron's selection of soloists was impeccable; the voices complimented each other and the duets were devoid of an overpowering voice.

A work of this magnitude always risks comparisons but the Bach Ensemble presentation was a fitting coda to their tenth anniversary season. The group was rewarded by a virtually full house with well-deserved standing ovations.

## BIG Arts Community Chorus, Sanibel

There are some musical experiences that are totally unexpected.

One such was the performance of the Big Arts Community Chorus on Sanibel Island (March 22), an un-auditioned group of 80 singers under the direction of Steve Cramer. The chorus epitomized the choral art form in its ability to enjoy the music and have fun. That is not to say that their singing lacked a good sound. Quite the opposite...it was excellent, but their enjoyment enhanced the sound and made the performance. It demonstrated quite effectively that it takes immersion in the music to produce good music and great entertainment. Cramer's eclectic program included jazz, Gershwin, trumpet solos, opera, drums, African chants and many, many solos by members of the chorus. The overflow audience was completely caught up in the performance which added even more incentive to the chorus. Cramer has gradually built the chorus in numbers and in quality by selecting challenging music and allowing singers solo participation at a level rarely seen in most choruses.



Cramer

## Symphonic Chorale of Southwest Florida

Change can sometimes be disconcerting but in the case of the Symphonic Chorale of



Southwest Florida, McDonnell change has invigorated the group. Formerly the Southwest Florida Symphony Chorus, they split off from the orchestra a year ago as an independent chorus. Their final concert of this their first season, Beethoven, An Epic Journey, was presented in both Naples and Fort Myers. (March 24 and 25). Joined by the voices of the Ave Maria Choir and with orchestra the chorus displayed remarkable discipline for such a large group (120 singers). Talented Artistic Director Tim McDonnell's artistry was apparent right from the opening Kyrie as each vocal line was clearly articulated in Anton Dvorak's Mass in D Major. The Gloria provided a change of pace and showcased the tenor section but the highlight of the piece was the Agnus Dei which could almost be interpreted as a lullaby.

Brahm's Schicksalslied (Song of Destiny), opened with beautifully hushed choral singing. The warm harmonies in the early part of the work gave way to the turbulent second section and the full chorus later in the piece.

Guest pianist John Robillette was no less than thrilling in Beethoven's powerful Fantasia, Op. 80, (Choral Fantasy) for piano, orchestra and chorus. His virtuosity was in full vigor as the majesty of the piece built toward the culmination of one of Beethoven's most recognized compositions. The final chorus had the audience of over 500 riveted to their seats. A premier performance.

# And More

*A Trio of Choral Ensembles*  
*Sarasota Young Voices*  
Geneviève Beauchamp, conductor  
*Belle Canto*  
Elizabeth Goldstein, conductor  
*Gloria Musicae*  
Joseph Holt, Conductor



**MUSIC OF BROADWAY!!**  
MAY 6, 2012      TICKETS: \$15  
4:00 P.M.      [www.faithsarasota.com](http://www.faithsarasota.com)  
Faith Lutheran Church  
4464 Beneva Rd. Sarasota, FL 34238  
941.924.4664  
JOIN US FOR A COMPLIMENTARY RECEPTION

## Choral collaboration connects the generations

Combine the Sarasota Young Voices with Gloria Musicae and Belle Canto and good things are bound to happen. The Music of Broadway will be offered in concert at Faith Lutheran Church in Sarasota at 4 pm, Sunday, May 6.

Every week, kids from Sarasota and Manatee counties meet to make music, to laugh and to express themselves in a safe environment under the direction of Geneviève Beauchamp. While studying quality music, SYV singers learn how to serve their community by performing for different events including concert series, churches, retirement homes, and more.

In this unique collaboration they sing with professionals and will perform a varied program including selections by Rodgers and Hammerstein from favorite musicals and other lighter musical fare.

Artistic directors:

Joseph Holt, Gloria Musicae

Elizabeth Goldstein, Belle Canto

Genevieve Beauchamp, Sarasota Young Voices

## Exciting travel plans

### Key Chorale

American Celebration of Music Tour in Ireland & Britain

July 6-17, 2012

Artistic Director, Joe Caulkins

### Voices of Naples

"Gloria's, Hallelujahs, Amen's" Tour in Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest

June 7-16, 2012

Artistic Director, Doug Renfro

## Chorus America article features Ensemble Newsletter

Under the category of Innovations, Chorus America has posted an article on their website about our Ensemble Newsletter. Check it out at [www.chorusamerica.org](http://www.chorusamerica.org).

## A word to the wise

E-mails continued to flow in to Ensemble at a high rate from audience members through March and April after the final round of concerts before the summer months. One thing is clear and consistent; this audience is engaged. They know what they like and it's surprising how many say they attend a concert not as a follower of a certain group but rather to hear certain music.

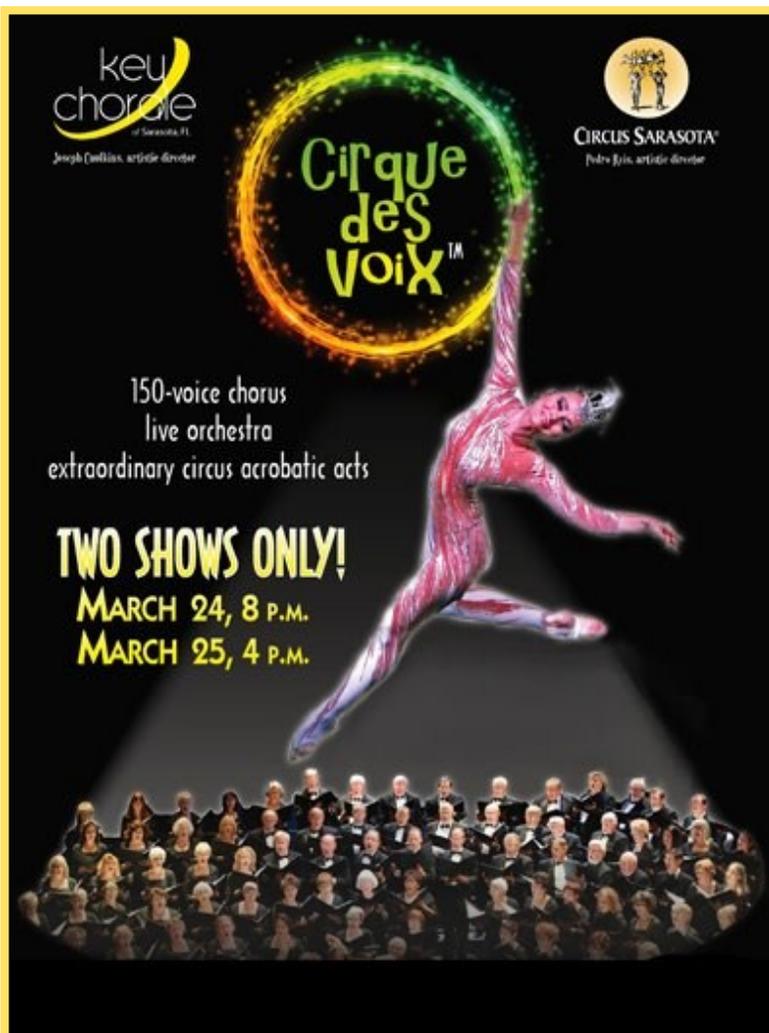
Those of us who have been involved in choral music all our lives tend sometimes to be inward thinking and focus on what we like to sing not necessarily what people like to hear. That may be OK if you're the only chorus in town but that's not the case in southwest Florida where there is a myriad of choral choices. Most groups are formed because their singers have a common interest in a certain type of music—masterworks, contemporary, Barbershop, Pops, etc. and each genre has a core group of followers but based on the e-mails we received there is a large crossover segment.

There's a fine line between selecting music that keeps singers interested and music that draws the audience. There is no question that Pops concerts draw larger audiences and many choruses use them as a way to fund their classical concerts.

That's a decision each group has to make but bear in mind that it's the audience that defines your future.



# And Finally---



## Great Marketing = Full house

Talk about impressive promotion of a concert. It doesn't get much better than this from **Key Chorale** for their March Cirque des Voix concerts at the Palladium in St. Petersburg in collaboration with Circus Sarasota.

Musical masterpieces included works by John Williams and Beethoven and highlights from Carl Orff's monumental "Carmina Burana."

Word has it they had two sold out performances. The power of effective marketing. Bravo!!!

Artistic Director (Ringmaestro) Joe Caulkins, above center, in "circus" attire with the Flying Wallenda's.

## Charities and communities benefit from choral groups

Is it a trend? Too soon to tell. But some choruses are donating part of their net concert proceeds to charitable organizations...one non profit giving to another... and others are community activists.

**Vocal Artistry** this past season teamed with Dance Alliance, Kellyn Celtic Arts and Artist Leoma Lovegrove to benefit Salvation Army, Footsteps to the Future and Lee Interfaith For Empowerment.

**Symphonic Chorale of Southwest Florida's** spring concert benefitted the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Two concerts, one in Fort Myers and one in Naples

The Bach Festival student festival was developed in 2008 by the **Bach Ensemble** as a means of introducing Baroque music to area young people.

**Voices of Naples** established a scholarship fund for the purpose of assisting talented graduating seniors intending to pursue a college major associated with vocal music.

**Opera Naples** has The Young Artists Program, Student Apprentice Program and the In-School Program, all for young artist development.

**Charlotte Chorale** — with the continuing cooperation of the music faculty of the school system, talented students are assisted through scholarships from the Chorale as well as offered exciting performance opportunities in concert with the well-trained voices of the Chorale.



## That's All Folks