

Redeemer Children's Choir

2006-2007

There is a deep, innate, almost inexpressible yearning within each one of us to find our voice in life. Stephen R. Covey

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The Contemporary Children's Choir and The Inspirational Story of The Chicago Children's Choir

Fifty years ago, at the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, on Chicago's south side, Rev. Christopher Moore began a choir with the intent that young people of diverse backgrounds learn about each other by making beautiful music together. The Chicago Children's Choir is a quintessential example of the breadth of the best of contemporary children's choirs. Children ages 8-18 sing in treble, men's, and full SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) groups. Their repertoire is multi-cultural, singing classical, folk, gospel, and contemporary music from around the world. Today 3200 children participate in this wonderful organization because Rev Moore dared to dream great things for the children of Chicago.

Today's children have a wealth of musical opportunities available to them. Around the world, choirs and orchestras comprised entirely of children can rival adult groups. As the number and skill level of these groups has grown, their legitimacy has stirred enormous interest among choral professionals. Much research in the last twenty years has revolutionized how we teach music to children and cultivate and nurture their voices. The sky is the limit for today's Children's Choirs. They may sing in beautiful unison, two-part treble or they may sing a Mozart Mass in four parts, and travel near and far in the process.

Making music sets in motion a positive energy field which, I believe, sends out ever-widening positive influence on our fellow humans and our world. I believe that children really can change the world with their music. It is my dream to help them!

Yours in faith

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Compelling Reasons to Sing in Choir

The children's choir is a powerful tool in a society that yearns for belonging, for being a part of a whole that gives beauty to life, that helps people understand themselves, and that helps to develop a lifelong skill.

Jeneal Krehbiel , Lawrence Children's Choir, Kansas

- Hearing and making beautiful music has a profound impact on children's lives.
- Singing in choir can answer a child's quest for truth and beauty, poetry, and provides access to the soul. Children discover the divine in themselves through music, growing into compassionate adults with the means to express all the wonder of life, centered and secure in the love of God.
- Choristers learn the discipline of corporate hard work which teaches concentration, focus

- Children who serve the congregation and God in choir feel the importance of their work and often continue to center their lives in church long after their beginning choir experience is over. They develop poise that transfers to all areas of life.

The Role of Singing Children in Worship

Through their song, children have a very important role to play in the life of a parish, giving their enthusiasm, energy, transparency, joyous abandon, their ability to embrace the moment, and their clear innocent voices to all who hear them, touching lives in profound ways. At The Church of Our Redeemer, young people are valued as participants in worship.

Redeemer Children's Choir

The Children's Choir is comprised of children grades 3 and up singing together in a large group, as well as smaller, age appropriate, specialized groups. We teach music in an age-appropriate fashion with understanding of the natural developmental milestones of the child's voice.

Rehearsals

Children are expected to attend rehearsal every Tuesday unless they have a compelling excuse. Please notify the music director if your child will be absent with a message to the church office, and email. We do not rehearse during school vacation.

Respectful Behavior

Dan and I both love children and enjoy our work with them very much. We know that the example of who we are and the example of behavior we set for the children must be above reproach. Choir must be a safe and nurturing place for choristers. At the same time, we expect the children's respect for us, as well as for each other.

Auditions

Children are auditioned each new season, not for entrance purposes, but so that we can better assess their voices and any needs they may have. This also helps us place voices.

Memory and Performance

We ask the children to memorize their anthems, and we ask parents to help their children with learning their music. There are several reasons for this. Children who have memorized their music are able to lift up their heads and physically sing better and truly give their songs to the congregation. Children who can sing their music with confidence will have a positive experience as worship leaders, which promotes self-esteem. Occasionally we will send home a recording of an anthem. This can help the chorister with an aural frame of reference.

Numbers, Folders, and Home Folders

Each student is assigned a number and a corresponding numbered Music Folder and number Hymnal. They also have a home Music Folder with copies of music to be

memorized. Please help your children to bring their home folder each week so that we may keep it updated.

Communication

At the last rehearsal of each month, a newsletter will come home in the home folder with all pertinent information on the next month. We will use email to further update parents. At some point our schedule will be updated regularly online, but we are not quite there yet.

Sundays

The Children's Choir sings in the 9 o'clock service on the first Sunday of every month. We hope parents will find this convenient since it is also Parish Breakfast Sunday. All warm-ups take place at 8:30 unless otherwise noted. We must make critical decisions about the day's performance at this time based on the children present. When children come in late, it puts the well-being of the entire group in jeopardy. If necessary, please assist your child in robing, **and in hanging up their robes with their name tags after the service, as well as putting their music and hymnals away.** All the children will have additional music and possibly other Sundays when they will sing that music as part of a smaller sub-group of choristers based on age or skill level.

Special Programs

In addition to Sunday mornings, the Children's Choir will sing for the fall Evensong, The Advent Procession, and the Christmas Eve Creche Service. They will, I'm sure, have

some part, probably in small groups, in the spring Talent Show.

We hope to participate in a festival with other choirs this year. We believe that taking the choir beyond the church walls is the best incentive for keeping the membership involved.

Older Singers and Nightwatch

Older participants earn the opportunity to travel to The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York for an overnight at Nightwatch.

Choir Moms and Dads

We need parents to assist with preparation of and cleaning of robes. Planning and executing group parties and celebrations. Future overnight retreat at start of season? Sleepover in the Meeting room? Dream big dreams for our children.

Your Child and The Hymnal

The Hymnal 1982 is a spiritual wealth of music and verse, and is one of the best tools for teaching music. We use *The Hymnal* to teach sight-singing and theory, as well as background on the hymns. Did you know that on each page, along with the hymn, you can find not only the composer and lyricist and their dates, but also the name and source of the tune and text, the meter, where to look for alternate settings, and suggested metronome markings? Since it has been thirty years since the first copies of *The*

Hymnal came out, we also use music from many alternate sources. In addition to *Wonder, Love, and Praise*, and *My Heart Sings Out* (Church Publishing), we also use *Common Ground*(GIA), *Common Praise*(Anglican Church of Canada), *Iona Abbey Worship Book*, *There is One Among Us*(Wild Goose), *New Century Hymnal*(Pilgrim), *Songs of Gods People*(Oxford), *Spirit and Song*(Oregon Catholic Press), and *Worship and Rejoice*(Hope).

The Singers Ten-Day Catechism

When getting ready for any performance, but especially for a Major Work, Christmas or Easter, we all need to take care of ourselves and our voices.

- Get plenty of sleep.
- Drink lots of water to hydrate the vocal cords.
- Try not to have caffeine.
- Try not to eat sweets before singing.
- Get good exercise and deep breathing.
- Try to come to rehearsal warmed up. Breath control can also be practiced easily during daily routines.
- Focus on the fact that this work is for the glory of God. If we remember the phrase *God working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine, we open ourselves for the spirit to enter our work.*

Alexander Technique and Body Mapping

One of the most important elements of good singing is using the proper imagery in the mind to command the

body to produce beautiful sound. For many children, singing is so natural, but for many, awareness of the body and how to use it as an instrument must be taught. The Alexander Technique enhances performance for actors, dancers, and musicians by improving ease, freedom of movement, balance, support, flexibility and coordination. Body mapping helps us to understand how our bodies are put together so that we may better use our bodies to serve our art. We utilize both these methods to help the children make better use of their instruments.

Debunking the Myth of the Mozart Effect

A separate booklet is available to help parents with the many questions they may have about raising musical children. The premise is that, while the theory of the Mozart Effect has some merit, there are really so many things that we can do to raise musical children, and all good music that children hear becomes part of the musical scaffolding of their minds.

Voice for Life and

The Royal School of Church Music

The Royal School of Church Music was founded in 1939 by Sir Sydney Nicholson to provide standards for the training of choristers. The program uses the principles of incentive, choristers musically as well as personally. As children progress in their training, they earn ribbons with medals to wear with their robes. The first level requirements are listed below. The RSCM runs one-week summer programs at locations around the country, as well as in

England and other countries. These programs are wonderful for honing a chorister's skills, as well as meeting other musicians from around the world or around the globe.

Teams and Team Leaders

The team system is used to reinforce the formation of positive habits, and use the peer leadership principle to raise up older, more experienced choristers, while they set an example for the younger choristers. The team with the most points at the end of the year gets rewarded.

Choristers Prayer (RSCM)

Bless, O Lord, us thy servants who minister in thy temple.

Grant that what we sing with our lips we may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth in our lives. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN

Voice for Life, Level One: Light Blue Ribbon

- I. General Training
 - A. Attendance and Punctuality. 70% required.
 - B. Following the director. Shows respect and good manners in the rehearsal as well as a high level of concentration.
 - C. Rehearsal Drill. Coming in prepared: folders, hymnals, ready to begin.
 - D. Service Drill. Coming on time, robed, good general behavior during worship and singing.
 - E. Care of Music. Leave in original condition!

- F. Care of Robes. Hang carefully after service on own hanger.
- II. Musical Skills
- A. Following music. Know where we stop in hymns, anthems, etc. Identify rhythmic value, pitch, interval. Find own part in multi-part anthem.
 - B. Distinguishing Basic Rhythmic Values – eighth, quarter, half and whole notes and rests. Clapping, identification in music.
 - C. Names of Notes, treble clef from middle C to A above.
 - D. Musical Terms. Covering notation, dynamics, tempo and phrasing.
 - E. Recognition of higher/lower pitches. Privately on piano.
- III. Vocal Skills
- A. Matching pitch.
 - B. Sustaining long notes – 10 counts.
 - C. Sing five note scale. Use movable ‘Do’.
 - D. Warm up drill. All exercises used in choir.
- IV. Repertoire.
- A. Service Music, Know Doxology from memory.
 - B. Read three verses of a hymn(s) perfectly showing excellent posture and declamation of the text.
 - C. Sing part of anthem, from memory.
 - D. Answer questions about unknown piece of music.

- V. Christian Education.
 - A. The Lord's Prayer
 - B. The Chorister's Prayer
 - C. Discussion of days or seasons of church year.
 - D. Creed or statement of faith. What are they?
Name two important ones.

Mission Statement

The music department serves a diverse congregation with many different programs. Our primary goal is to support the ministry and mission of the church as directed by the Rector and Vestry by illuminating the word of God with music. Secondary goals are continued growth of the department, collaboration among the various musical groups, children's and youth music ministry which deepens spirituality as it develops musical and leadership potential, ministry and outreach to the community, and evolving a musical style which suits and grows out of the tastes and strengths of this congregation. We strive to use our resources wisely for the overall good and growth of the parish. By choosing repertoire most fitting to our strengths we achieve a level of excellence which best serves our members, the congregation, and the community, and - most importantly - which best serves God.

2006-2007 Schedule of Events

- Sunday, October 1 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, October 22 Evensong service, 5pm
 Potluck dinner to follow in great hall
Sunday, November 5 All Saints 10 am service
 combined anthem Vivaldi's Gloria
Tuesday, November 7 **no school, regular rehearsal**
Sunday, December 3 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, December 3 Advent Procession, 5pm
Sunday, December 24 Creche Service
 3pm warmup for 3:30 program

DECEMBER 25-29 SCHOOL VACATION

NO REHEARSAL

- Sunday, January 7 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, February 4 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, February 11 Lexington Choral Festival
 at Redeemer 3pm

FEBRUARY 19-23 SCHOOL VACATION

NO REHEARSAL

- Sunday, March 4 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, April 1 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
 Palm Sunday
Sunday, April 8 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
 Easter!!

APRIL 16-20 SCHOOL VACATION

NO REHEARSAL

- Sunday, May 6 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service
Sunday, June 3 8:30 warm up for the 9 o'clock service

Resources for Young Musicians

Websites

Chicago Children's Choir

www.ccchoir.org

Books

DVDs

Leonard Bernstein's Young People's Concerts

Recordings

Classical kids recordings

Where to Hear Good Music

Sound and Spirit

WGBH Sunday, 5pm

Ellen explores our human experience through music.

From the Top

WGBH Sunday, 6pm

Christopher O'Reilly hosts the best young classical musicians in an old-time radio talent show format.

I recommend that you check websites of local universities and conservatories for listings of free concerts. This is the best way to keep down costs of musically educating your children, hands down. You can afford to hear so much more this way!

For more complete listings, please refer to *Debunking the Myth of the Mozart Effect*.

