CCC Opens Doors for Talented Musicians

Our CCC children stay with us because they’ve become part of a community where they experience affirmation, rigor, kindness, and laughter. Although they are all talented musically, and many will continue to sing throughout their lives, most will not pursue music as a career. But for six of our current and past members, music is a calling; they hear music all the time, as I did when I was young. They have that rare combination of talent and drive that makes it impossible for them to do music.

Vince Wilson, now 24, is pursuing a career in gospel music as a member of the Philadelphia-based group Pastor Mark & Fresh Fire Movement. With this group he’s performed at the Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Delaware, and at historically black universities including Clark Atlanta and Morgan State, sharing the stage with gospel luminaries including Grammy-award winner Dorinda Clark-Cole and Tye Tribbett.

Marquise Miles has just entered the University of the Arts in Philadelphia to study voice and dance. The CCC children acknowledge him as our best dancer, and his vocal ability is matched by that of only one other chorus member, 11th-grader Ja’Quay Lundy. Ja’Quay has pure star power—think Beyoncé.

To approach “My Master Hath a Garden,” which narrates an idea of heaven, Dan asked the Training and Junior choirs, who are mostly 8 and 9 years old, engage with two particularly challenging pieces they were learning, “My Master Hath a Garden” and “Looking Glass River.”

Dan Beal, the CCC’s assistant music director, is buzzing with ideas to deepen the choristers’ experience of music. This summer, he brought in the visual arts to help children in the Training and Junior choirs, who are mostly 8 and 9 years old, engage with two particularly challenging pieces they were learning, “My Master Hath a Garden” and “Looking Glass River.”

To approach “My Master Hath a Garden,” which narrates an idea of heaven, Dan asked the students to paint a picture of what their own heavenly garden would look like. Some students focused on the intricacies of individual flowers, while others depicted themselves, friends, or lost loved ones in their imaginary landscapes.

The exercise brought Dan new insights into his choristers’ individual personalities while helping the children expand their understanding of the music.

Alainna Earl is taking SAT prep courses and working on college applications at the College Access Center of Delaware County. She plans to start college in fall 2012.

Demar McCoy will enter Drexel University as a nursing major in January. She is working full time as a pharmacists technician and will continue working part time after she starts college.

Young Singers Explore Music Visually

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To make a tax-deductible contribution to the Chester Children’s Chorus, please detach this coupon, complete, and mail to:

Chester Children’s Chorus, Swarthmore College, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081

Enclosed is a check in the amount of

☐ $35  ☐ $75  ☐ $100  ☐ $250  ☐ $500  ☐ $1,000  ☐ Other:

(Write a check payable to Swarthmore College with Chester Children’s Chorus in memo field)

Please charge my gift to

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Card # ____________________________ Exp. Date: ________ / ________

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My gift will be matched by my employer. (Please enclose your signed matching gift form.)

Give online at www.swarthmore.edu. Choose “other fund,” and specify “Chester Children’s Chorus.”

For information on making a gift of securities, call Managing Director Andrea Knox at (610) 328-8286.

THANK YOU!
Kasia Stevenson is our singer-songwriter, with a sense of lyricism that neither I nor any other chorus member can approach. This summer she wrote three songs, and when she sang them for the rest of the group, we knew instantly that we were hearing something special.

William Taylor, our 15-year-old drummer, is only happy and at peace when he’s holding drumsticks in his hands. Singing in the chorus he is restless, often tapping rhythm on his legs even during a slow Renaissance motet. But behind a drum set he is all radiance and focus, smiling mightily as he delivers rhythmic combinations beyond the ability of most professional drummers. While I work with the vocal and composition students, the chorus provides drum lessons for William with Mark Beecher, who was the chorus’s drum accompanist until William moved into that role.

The chorus is a special place for all our members, a place where they grow as musicians and find their inner strengths. But it is an extra-special place for these six gifted young people who are getting or have gotten their start here. Thank you for helping them find themselves, and for helping us find more children like them.

—John Alston