



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Summer's Magic Saturates Fall Music Making

Although we are deep into rehearsals for our December concerts, the children and I continue to sing and work under the spell of an absolutely glorious summer.

I had hoped the children would have a musical growth spurt in a couple of years, when the fifth-graders who make up most of the soprano section will be in seventh grade. Completely snubbing my plan, our young singers put on their growth spurt two years early and produced the most intense, productive, diverse, and musically satisfying summer program and concert we've ever had.

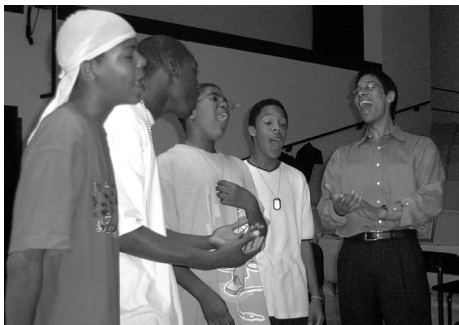
### Madrigals and More

As I look back on our summer concert repertoire, I'm still flabbergasted. In five weeks, the Concert Choir mastered a record 10 new songs, an entire concert's

worth of the most challenging and sophisticated music they have ever sung. They included:

- A Tallis motet and a Dowland lute song.
- Three madrigals, two sung in French and one in Italian.
- *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica*, the South African people's national anthem, sung—as best I could teach them—in Xhosa.
- A spiritual, *O Sinner Man*, which the children helped arrange in what we dubbed the Chester Children's Chorus Composer's Circle. During a Friday rehearsal, we all sat in a circle, tossing out and refining dozens of musical ideas, to come up with an arrangement we all liked. It's now one of our favorite production numbers.

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Summer jam: Director John Alston and the teen boys break into an impromptu madrigal. From left: Jabree Reaves, Vincent Wilson, Craig Robinson, Nkenge Daniels, and John.

Join us in celebrating the season!

**HOLIDAY CONCERT**  
**SATURDAY, DEC. 11, 8 P.M.**

**Lathem Hall, Widener University**  
**13th and Potter streets, Chester**

**Reception to follow in University Center.**

*Admission is free—all are invited.*

No tickets required

## Meet Kellie Bowker: She's Helping Us Grow

Kellie Bowker joined the chorus in June 2003, as part-time assistant music director to teach the Training Chorus. In short order, "Her teaching and her commitment to the chorus have made her essential to our future," says Director John Alston. "We can't imagine the program without her."

"The Training Chorus is the children's introduction to the way we make music, and Kellie's groups sing more beautifully and do more challenging music than any previous beginning groups," John says. The program has also benefited from Kellie's ideas, unflinching critiques, bub-

bling good nature, and willingness to lend a hand with anything from recreation to fund-raising. She wowed the children last summer by bringing in a griddle to make pancake breakfasts and has charmed the boys by talking sports.

For her part, Kellie welcomes the opportunity to teach children choral singing at a time when school music programs are being cut back. "Singing is such a natural, joyful activity for children," she says. "Is there a better job in the world than helping them develop their love of music?"

Kellie holds a degree in music history



Young choristers relax with Assistant Music Director Kellie Bowker

from Temple University and is a pre-school teacher at Lansdowne Friends School. She has two daughters, Kayla, 8, and Kiara, 6.

Our two new vans arrived at the end of July! With special high-backed seats, they meet federal safety standards for transporting children. We thank all who helped us acquire the vans, especially Springfield Ford and its president, Jim Thomas (center), shown with John Alston, chorus director, and Cordelia Delson, board president. Additional assistance came from Swarthmore College, Ann and Roger McNamee, and other donors.



## What's New?

### Children Serve by Singing

The children are serving Chester with two fall concerts. They gave a benefit for the community service programs of Chester Eastside Ministries on Oct. 2 and will sing a holiday concert on Dec. 16 for senior citizens living in Chester Housing Authority residences.

### We're on the Web!

Check us out at [www.chesterchildrenschorus.org](http://www.chesterchildrenschorus.org). Send feedback on the site to [ccc@swarthmore.edu](mailto:ccc@swarthmore.edu).

To make a tax-deductible contribution, please detach this coupon, complete, and mail to the following address:

Chester Children's Chorus, Swarthmore College, Department of Music and Dance, 500 College Avenue, Swarthmore PA 19081

☐ Enclosed is a check in the amount of ☐ \$35 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Check should be payable to Swarthmore College with Chester Children's Chorus in memo field)

☐ Please charge my gift to my:

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THANK YOU!

# Summer's Magic

(continued)

## Learning to Love Languages

It was never my plan to do so much foreign language music in one summer. But the children kept learning, so we kept going. They often complained when we started a new piece: "This is too hard," or "I don't like this." But in two or three days, they would warm up to it and become more confident, and then suddenly they owned it and loved it.

One morning, they sang a French madrigal and *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica* a dozen times during a break just for fun—without my prompting! I can't remember a better day in my life.

## Junior Choir, Training Chorus Blossom

The 25 talented younger children in our Junior Choir and Training Chorus made spectacular progress, too, under the Assistant Music Director Kellie Bowker. I am amazed at the quality of their singing voices and the complexity of the music they are able to learn. And their singing is so joyful and uninhibited! When they joined forces with the Concert Choir at the July 31 concert, the result was a big, confident, wonderful sound.

## More Triumphs Ahead

The concert was a tour de force. The children sang expressively in a way they

never had before, communicating musical and poetic ideas in many languages. This takes real courage: Imagine children from Chester singing Renaissance music in French and Italian! It was a triumph for them, and they reveled in it.

Our community-wide Holiday Concert on Dec. 11 and our Dec. 16 concert for Chester senior citizens will give the children new opportunities to shine. But they will need a thousand more triumphs to give them the confidence to explore the world and to flourish intellectually and culturally. With your help, we can give them a few more.

—John Alston

# Summer Scrapbook: Reaching for New Horizons



Ellen Peters, one of 38 reading volunteers, found that a music practice room was a quiet place to read with David O'Neal.

Tom Whitman, associate professor and chair of music at Swarthmore College, introduced a group of fifth-graders to the music and instruments of the Indonesian gamelan orchestra.



Kiara Morales and Jennifer Foster displayed bags of sprouted seeds. They were among eight children who studied plant and animal behavior for five weeks with Elizabeth Vallen, associate professor of biology, and other members of the Swarthmore College Biology Department.



Stefan Cassell clapped out a rhythm in a Wheel of Fortune game devised by counselor Jordan Nelson to test musical knowledge.



ELIZABETH VALLEN



Chorus members performed a harvest dance from Mali, West Africa, at the close of a four-day workshop in African drumming and dance led by Jeannine Osayande and her Dunya Performing Arts Co.

## What's New?

### School Research Begins

We have taken the first step toward fulfilling Director John Alston's dream of an arts school in Chester. A working group under board member Wendy Emrich is gathering information about the feasibility and possible structure of a school.

### Spring Concert is May 14

Save Saturday, May 14, at 8 p.m. for our spring concert in Lang Concert Hall, Swarthmore College.

## CHESTER CHILDREN'S CHORUS

John Alston, *founder and director*  
Andrea Knox, *managing director*

### Advisory Board

Cordelia Delson, *president*  
Scott Kessler, *vice-president and secretary*  
Leslie Price, *treasurer*  
Maurice Eldridge, *ex officio, Swarthmore College*  
Wendy Emrich  
Edmund Jones  
Elbert Sampson

### Voice

*The Newsletter of the Chester Children's Chorus*

Andrea Knox '64, *editor*  
Phillip Stern '84, *designer*  
Photos by Andrea Knox unless noted otherwise.

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STEVEN GOLDBLATT '67



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