



Spring Concerts



English madrigals, an R&B "Battle of the Sexes," and original gospel!

FRIDAY, MAY 7, 8 P.M.
Chester High School
9th & Penn Streets, Chester

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 8 P.M.
Lang Concert Hall
Swarthmore College

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 4 P.M.
St. Peter's Church in the Great Valley
Malvern

Community invited to all concerts. Admission free. No tickets required.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

CCC Headline News: Our Children Want More!!

Every now and then teachers are lucky enough to have children who ask for activities that are both exciting and good for them. Our fall season was an extraordinary period of growth, and the endless requests from our 100 members are a genuine testimony to the value of the program and how much children love to learn.

"Sing it again, sing it again," was a constant refrain from the Junior Choir and Training Chorus. They begged their teacher, assistant music director Daniel Beal, to sing almost all the repertoire, including the medieval carol "Personent Hodie," which they particularly loved.

"My turn, my turn" was what I heard again and again when I rehearsed the Palestrina motet, "Sicut Cervus," with the



Director John Alston rehearses with Festival Choir members Nasahja Bohannan and Darius Thomas.

Festival Choir. The children vied to sing the closing phrase in one breath.

"Can we sing more pieces like (Handel's) 'Hallelujah Chorus?'" I feel so accomplished when we sing classical music," was alto Jamillah Queen's request.

"May I have voice lessons?" came from alto Asia Cherry. Of course! Asia is learning an 18th-century Italian art song, "Caro Mio Ben," in lessons with me.

"I would love to learn to play jazz

Letter continued, over

Sing to Learn Off to Rousing Start



Assistant Music Director Daniel Beal leads a Sing-to-Learn lesson for first-grade students at Main Street Elementary School in Chester.

Our new Sing-to-Learn program in Chester elementary schools, which began in September and reaches 250 kindergarten and first-grade students in three schools, is a hit with teachers and children alike.

"I have never had a program my

students more looked forward to," wrote Dianne Nicely, a first grade teacher at Main Street Elementary School. Sing-to-Learn, a partnership with the Chester Upland School District, is also offered in the Columbus and Stetser elementary schools.

The focus of Sing-to-Learn is teaching songs that reinforce the children's classroom lessons with topics such as geometric shapes and natural habitats. "I Love to Read" and "Columbus was a Rhombus" have been big hits, but all the songs are popular. Teachers tell us that children sing the songs on the playground and hum them

Rousing Start continued, over

Members Tell How Chorus Changed their Lives

For Jamillah Queen and Jenniffer Foster, the musical inspiration and friendship they found as chorus members scrubbed away their anger and misery.

For Jabree Reaves, the chorus experience crystallized a desire to attend college and become an audio producer.

For Vincent Wilson, the chorus is "the reason I went to college."

Chorus membership has been a defining part of many children's lives; these four spoke at our 15th Anniversary Benefit in October to thank honoree Maurice Eldridge for his part in making the chorus and its influence on their lives possible. Maurice, vice president for College and community relations at Swarthmore College, has been a mainstay of the chorus since he helped Director John Alston found it in 1994.

Jamillah, a senior at Chester High School, says she was "mad at the world" when she joined the chorus at the end of

second grade. But, she said, "I kept singing, and I started changing. Now, I smile all the time."

Changed Lives continued, over

The 15th Anniversary Album
Great for family listening — Great as a gift!
\$12 by mail or \$10 at the CCC office. For mail order form: www.chesterchildrenschorus.org
For office location and sales hours: (610) 957-6049



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: _____.
(Check should be payable to Swarthmore College with Chester Children's Chorus in memo field)
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Card # _____
Expires: ____/____ Amount to charge: \$ _____
- 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." **THANK YOU!**

Shalayia Seth of the Festival Choir is one of 12 chorus members who take weekly lessons with piano teacher Amie Richan.



Concert Choir member Marquise Miles regularly volunteers to help assistant music director Dan Beal teach younger children; here they lead sight-reading exercises.



Concert Choir member William Taylor has displayed his extraordinary drumming talents in chorus concerts; he studies with Mark Beecher, a member of the band that plays at our concerts.

Letter ... continued

piano," was Marquise Miles' wish. He's now studying with me.

A constant plea is "May I have piano lessons?" We are able to say yes to 14 children who take individual lessons on Saturdays; dozens more are on the waiting list. Our primary piano teacher, Amie Richan, teaches 12 students and two older boys studying with Dan.

Dan, Amie, I, and all the CCC staff do our very best to give all our children everything they want from us, which is also everything they need from us. We need you to continue making your generous gifts to the CCC children, come hear them sing, and cheer them wildly. You'll feel wonderful, and so will they.

—John Alston

Changed Lives ... continued

For Jenny, a 10th-grader at Chester High, eight years of chorus membership have brought friends and a passion for music that cured "my misery." She studies theory and composition and conducted a piece at the chorus's December concert. Thanks to the chorus, "I have to be the best of the best," she said at the benefit.

Jabree graduated from Chester High in 2009 after 10 years in the chorus and now attends the Art Institute of Philadelphia. "If not for John, Maurice, and the chorus, I might not be going to school for

audio production, which is what I really want to do," he said.

For Vince, the chorus "was a gateway to more academic endeavors, and it helped me reach a higher potential than I otherwise would have." Vince has completed three years at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is taking a year off while working as a teaching assistant at the Chester-Upland School of the Arts.

Stories like these affirm the chorus's success in our mission of changing lives through music.

Rousing Start ... continued

softly during tests as a memory aid. At the same time, the children learn musical basics: keeping time, singing on pitch, and singing musically rather than shouting.

Our Sing-to-Learn teacher is Daniel Beal, who joined the chorus in June as assistant music director. Chorus director

John Alston and Dan write all the songs, choosing topics in collaboration with classroom teachers.

When 130 Sing-to-Learn students performed in the district-wide Winter Celebration of Music in December, their singing and comportment "stole the show", John reported.

Read With a Child This Summer



Adult volunteers are the essential ingredient in the success of our summer reading program for the 8-year-olds in our Training Chorus. We need volunteers from 11 to 12 a.m., five mornings a week, from June 21 to July 23. For more information, go to www.chesterchildrenschorus.org or call managing director Andrea Knox at (610) 328-8286. Last summer, volunteer Diana Condon Trout read with chorus member Shaughnessy Dill.

Thriller Dance Routine Thrills



A highlight of the Michael Jackson medley at last summer's concert was the "Thriller" dance routine by Asia Cherry (left) and Destiny Sharp. Medleys of pop and R&B tunes, with sizzling arrangements by Director John Alston, have juiced both singers and audiences at recent concerts. The spring concerts on May 7, May 8, and May 16 will feature a "Battle of the Sexes" medley, including favorites from the Temptations and the Supremes.



At the 15th Anniversary Benefit last fall, chorus members (from left) Jamillah Queen, Jenniffer Foster, Jabree Reaves, and Vincent Wilson (far right) celebrated with honoree Maurice Eldridge (third from right) and Director John Alston.

CHESTER CHILDREN'S CHORUS

John Alston, founder and director
Andrea Knox '64, managing director
Daniel Beal, assistant music director
Elisa DeNofio, assistant

Voice
The newsletter of the Chester Children's Chorus
Andrea Knox, editor
Philip Stern '84, designer
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Kwaadera Blackwell of the Training Chorus admired Director John Alston's piano playing at a party celebrating the release of the chorus's 15th Anniversary Album CD.

