

PEACEMEAL

| A Volunteer Effort of the Portland Peace Choir |

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More Benefits of Singing!

Nicole recently sent us an article from **The Oregonian** about ... you guessed it ... the health benefits of singing! Drs. Mehmet Oz and Mike Rolzen talked about things they've observed about the power of song. They say that singing can help you:

- **Lower blood pressure** by releasing emotions, relaxing you, and making you happy.
- **Breathe easier.** COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) patients can improve lung function by singing just twice a week, studies have found.
- **Find serenity after cancer** by reducing anxiety and stress and promoting positive feelings.
- **Rewire the brain after a stroke.** If the left side of the brain is damaged by a stroke, singing can help the right side take over functions like speech.
- **Singing also improves general health,** boosting immunity, reducing stress, quieting snoring, and easing anxiety (which may also ease irritable bowel syndrome).

In addition, some studies suggest that amateur singers experience these benefits more strongly than do professionals, which is good news for all of us!

Say Hello to Amy!

Although we will all miss Beth and wish her well in her new endeavors, we are very excited to welcome

Amy Vanacore as our new accompanist. Amy is a very talented and spirited person.

She has more than 15 years of experience as a professional pianist and piano instructor. She holds a

B.A. from Brown University, where she studied music theory, percussion,

and psychology. Fluent in Spanish and English, she is passionate about cross-cultural learning, community, and social justice.

She has accompanied hundreds of singers and instrumentalists in a variety of genres, including classical, musical theater, folk, jazz, and rock, and is excited to be performing with Nicaraguan singer-songwriter Clara Grun this summer in Managua, Nicaragua. Amy enjoys working collaboratively with choirs and is thrilled about accompanying the Portland Peace Choir.



"As a collaborative pianist, I continually strive to interact musically with the other musicians and the audience in a meaningful way: Heart-to-heart."



cont'd from p.1



What Were They Thinking?

"Most people think of peace as a state of Nothing Bad Happening, or Nothing Much Happening. Yet if peace is to overtake us and make us the gift of serenity and well-being, it will have to be the state of Something Good Happening."

~ E.B. White

"When I say it's you I like, I'm talking about that part of you that knows that life is far more than anything you can ever see or hear or touch. That deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive. Love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed."

~ Fred Rogers

"It is better to be small, colorful, sexy, careless, and peaceful, like the flowers, than large, conservative, repressed, fearful, and aggressive, like the thunder lizards; a lesson, by the way, that the Earth has yet to learn."

~Tom Robbins, *Jitterbug Perfume*

"That idea of peace and love toward humanity shouldn't be nationalistic or denominational. It should be a chief concern for all mankind." ~Mos Def

We asked Amy to tell us a little more about herself and her interests to help us get to know her better.

Q: Do you play any other instruments?

Amy: *I played French horn in middle school and high school, but I think if I picked up one today it would definitely sound like a sick cow! Piano is really my main instrument, although I also noodle around on my marimba-xylophone hybrid at home.*

Q: Are you local? East Coast? Other?

Amy: *I was born in New York City and lived in the Bronx until I was four. This is something I have in common with hip-hop: We both came to life in the Bronx in the early 1970's. Then my family moved us upstate to a rural dairy farming community called Bloomville. It's not even a town. I think it recently became a hamlet. I spent the rest of my childhood there, playing in streams and cow pastures. Since then I've only lived in cities. I love the energy and diversity of cities. Yet I also appreciate trees and plants. I guess that's why I've been in Portland for the last 12 years.*

Q: Do you have a "day job"?

Amy: *For the past decade or so I have been doing nonprofit work (arts administration, education, and family resource navigation) part-time and music part-time, but in the past year, my music work has really expanded, so I am focusing solely on music now. I currently have 19 piano students and perform as an accompanist with the Portland Intergenerational Women's Choir as well as at solo festivals, school choir concerts, violin recitals, retreats, weddings, memorial services, holiday parties, and other events. This summer also marks my international debut, as I will be accompanying my singer-songwriter friend Clara Grun in Managua, Nicaragua, with Portland jazz saxophonist Reed Wallsmith (of the Blue Cranes). I am grateful for the opportunity to play with such amazing, internationally renowned musicians.*



From Left: Clara Grun, Reed Wallsmith, Amy Vanacore

Q: Do you have any hobbies or other interests?

Amy: *I am half-Italian so I love cooking, eating, and gardening. Growing my own food gives me immense joy! I am also half-Irish, so I love drinking tea, reading, and telling stories. I've always enjoyed stepping outside my own culture and getting to know other cultures and languages too. I have lived in Mexico and Nigeria, and have travelled to about nine other countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and South America.*

Q: Was there any particular event that caused you to look toward social justice?

Amy: *I can't think of one particular event. Perhaps it started in college (at Brown University), but it was a series of experiences, conversations, and observations that led to the crescendo that is my commitment to social justice. My commitment grows every day as my eyes are opened to the incredible inequalities and injustices that persist in our own community and around the world.*

Q: What other social justice related activities have you been involved with?

Amy: *I think I am, by nature, an agent of change. In most of the nonprofit jobs I have had, I have pushed the envelope when I felt it mattered. I believe in equality, equity, love, and unity. These things are counter to the systems we have in place that keep people down. One of my passions is increasing access to music in low-income communities. I am on the Oregon Chapter board of the MusicLink Foundation, which provides support to private lesson teachers who offer at least a 50% discount to students from low-income households. I also chair a music scholarship committee at the Oregon Community Foundation. I currently give partial scholarships to 6 of my private lesson students, because I want children of immigrants, children of working-class parents, children living in poverty to have an opportunity to learn to play piano.*

Q: What's the Spanish-speaking connection? Family, friends? Do you know other languages as well?

Amy: *I lived in Mexico and spoke only Spanish at home for about 4 1/2 years and I have lots of Spanish-speaking friends and piano students, so I am pretty fluent at this point. As for other languages, I can speak Italian haltingly, and I once wrote a seven-page paper in French. All I know how to say in Cantonese (from my nonprofit work with Chinese immigrants in San Francisco), though, is "I don't know how to speak Chinese" and "Hello, is Maureen there?"*

Q: How did you hook up with Clara?

Amy: *Our mutual friend Reed Wallsmith connected us about a year ago. Clara had just moved to Portland and was looking for job opportunities and Reed thought I would be a good contact for her since I've been here a while and know a lot of people. We had coffee and I ended up recruiting her to volunteer as a teaching assistant in my after-school piano classes at a school in a low-income, ethnically diverse community in Milwaukie, and then she volunteered all day, every day for a whole week as my right-hand woman at the multicultural music camp that I organized and led last summer at the same school. Clara has been a godsend! I am deeply grateful for our friendship and musical collaboration.*

Q: How did you get involved with the music in prison thing?

Amy: *I was hired by Intergenerational Outreach Choirs to accompany the choir of women in custody at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility last year. The long-term vision of Founder/Director Crystal Akins is to create a transitional choir for the women when they leave prison, so they can sing with their daughters and be part of a supportive, healthy community. Other women in the community will be trained to participate in the choir with the women in transition, and the plan is for me to be the accompanist of that choir. We hope it will come into being by 2018.*

Q: Do you have any songs in mind that you think the PPC could do particularly well? (We loved the one you shared with us at our rehearsal, by the way.)

Amy: *El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido! Have you sung this before? I'd be happy to help with pronunciation if needed/desired.*

So, there you have it ... a little bit of insight into Amy and what makes her tick. If you want to know more about the music she'll be playing this summer (and if you read Spanish), check out this link to a Nicaraguan TV station article about Clara Grun's music.

<http://www.tn8.tv/tn8-musical/325444-clara-grun-fuera-control-nicaragua/>



Uniting in Thought and Action

The Power of the Circle

When we are in circle with others, the energy stays contained within the group giving back to all.

There are many reasons why a gathering of people in a circle is powerful. A circle is a shape that is found repeatedly throughout the natural world, and it is a symbol of perfection. We recreate this perfect shape when we join others to form a circle. Being in a circle allows us experience each other as equals. Each person is the same distance apart from the next participant, and no one is seated higher than or stands apart from others in a circle. From tribal circles to the mythical round table of King Arthur, the circle has been the shape adopted by gatherings throughout history.

The circle is acknowledged as an archetype of wholeness and integration....when a group of people come together in a circle, they are united. This unity becomes even more powerful when each person reaches out to touch a neighbor and clasps hands. This physical connection unites thought and action, mind and body, and spirit and form in a circle. Because a circle has no beginning and no end, the agreement to connect in a circle allows energy to circulate from one person to the next, rather than being dissipated into the environment.

Like a candle used to light another candle, the connection that results when one person joins hands with another is greater than if each person were to stand alone. People who take part in a circle find that their power increases exponentially while with the group. Like a drop of water rippling on the surface of a pond, the waves of energy produced in a circle radiate outward in circular motion. While one person may act like a single beacon that emanates light, a circle of people is like a satellite dish that sends out energy. There is power in numbers, and when the commitment is made by many to face one another, clasp hands, and focus on one intention, their circle emanates ripples of energy that can change the world.

~Madisyn Taylor, excerpted from *The Daily OM*

PPC Happenings

PPC Summer Session

Rehearsals are **Weds. 8/3, 8/17 & 8/24** at St. David's. We will be singing Standards for this session and for the gig on 8/28 ... David has sent out a list so we can start practicing! The 8/17 rehearsal will also be our first official one with Amy, so don't miss it! Summer session dues are \$25, which includes 3 rehearsals and the Summer Session gig (details below).

Our **Summer Session gig** will be on **8/28** on the **Main Stage** at **Saturday Market** (on First St.) from **11:30 am - 1:30 pm**. We will meet at the Main Stage at 11:00 am.

UPDATE: PLEASE NOTE!

Penny Biel's BBQ Potluck originally scheduled for **8/20** has been cancelled.

The **PPC Fall Session** will start **Weds., 9/7, 7:00 pm** at St. David's. Join us and see what the new season has in store. DavEd's sneak peak at the repertoire: an exciting collection of music, including songs originally performed by Simon & Garfunkel, Ringo Starr, Peter, Paul and Mary, U2 and ... an amphibian.

PPC September Gig

On **9/24** PPC will be performing at 10:30 am at the Sherwood Rotary Club Peace Pole Dedication at Sherwood YMCA. We will again be singing mostly Standards (probably songs we will be rehearsing during our Summer Session). This event also includes a Peace Walk, display at the library, refreshments and children's activities.

Educating for Peace Event: Never Again Lecture

The Wholistic Peace Institute commemorates 71 years since the bombing of Japan in WWII with a survivor of Hiroshima.

8/12, 2:00-3:30 pm, Mary's Woods Auditorium, 14700 Holy Names Dr., Lake Oswego, OR 97305

FREE to residents of Mary's Woods and members of the Wholistic Peace Institute. A \$5 donation is requested from all others who are able.

RSVP by 8/11 to educatingforpeace1@gmail.com



Get to Know Your Fellow Singers

For nine months, every Wednesday night, we come together for a lifting of spirit, to raise our voices and to have some fun. Yet, how many of us know anyone outside our own section? How many of us know anything about who is IN our section? Please take a moment to share a brief bio with this publication. Guaranteed, your contribution will tighten the bond we've begun in our commitment to singing for peace.

This issue: meet (alto) Diane T:

I grew up in Southern California with a focus in High School on Drama and Dance. I supported myself from the age of 18 with office jobs for the next 20 years. At the time I "retired" from that type of work, I had been a buyer for 14 years and was working for a dialysis manufacturing company in Milwaukie, OR. I joined my husband Paul's photography business and have now been doing that as long as I worked in the business world. We have a grown son who is a kindergarten teacher in Denver. My other hobbies include gardening, sustainable living, astrology and reading, and writing.

~Diane T.

Suggestion Box

This is an opportunity for you, our readers, to tell us your ideas for ways to improve our choir. Please send your suggestion to us at: traciekorol@gmail.com or barbaraPPC@comcast.net

We can include your name with your suggestion or keep it anonymous, your choice.

Suggestion:

When we do the Circle Round For Freedom once a month, I suggest that we not hold hands during cold and flu season in order to prevent spread of sickness. Some folks just don't like holding hands with people they're not close friends with, anyway. For those who need a physical connection, let's connect arm-in-arm.

Having just watched the videos of the last concert I was struck by how much we look like a cluster of barrage balloons, dressed in various tones of white as we are. Rather than wearing the color of mourning in most of Asia, it would be more visually interesting to the audience, flattering to the singers, and representative of our prime objective to wear *colors*.

A mix of rainbow colors would be so much livelier and more inclusive!

ROYGBIV—pick your favorite.

An award-winning poem by Diane:

**SPEAK UP, YOU KNOW I CAN'T HEAR YOU WHEN THE INDUSTRIAL
MACHINE IS ON**

7 AM - THE DIGITAL DIAL FLIPS AND TRIGGERS THE SWITCH;

THE RADIO ENGAGES, A GENTLE REMINDER TO ME,

A 20TH CENTURY INDENTURED SERVANT

TOO TIRED TO NOTICE THAT THE SUN HAS ONCE AGAIN RISEN,

THAT IT IS TIME TO MAKE MY MORNING TREK.

THAT COFFEE SMELL...MY PAVLOVIAN RESPONSE,

GIVING ME A CHEMICAL ENTHUSIASM FOR THE NEW DAY;

CHOKING DOWN SOME TOASTER THINGS,

NO TIME TO TASTE OR BE THANKFUL;

HOPING THAT THE NUTRIENTS LISTED ON THE BOX

DON'T EVAPORATE ON THE WAY DOWN;

AT LAST, AT MY DESK...A MOMENT TO CATCH MY BREATH AND LISTEN

a small voice - what?

MY REVERIE INTERRUPTED BY A RINGING PHONE.

PROBLEMS, MEETINGS, TRAFFIC AND NOISE...

NO TIME, NO SILENCE TO LISTEN TO MY inner voice.

Reiki Circle Opportunity

We have recently learned that there are several members of the choir who practice Reiki (Penny B., Tracie K., Kate F., Barbara B.) Reiki healing energy work can be person-to-person but also global. In addition to creating a healing space for individuals we also wish to include a space for global healing by holding world events, places and peoples in crisis in the center of our circle and sending healing energy worldwide.

There is the potential to coordinate with larger, global groups; for example, a group in Seattle, Global Earthsend, reportedly has over fifty thousand Reiki practitioners connected worldwide via the internet sending healing energy to a particular part of the world each Friday night.

If you are interested in joining us, please send email to:

Tracie: traciekorol@gmail.com

or Barbara: barbaraPPC@comcast.net

Chorus Off-Campus

This month, lacking input from other choir members, I drafted Jeff Jones (a captive audience, so to speak) to tell us a little bit about his music activities outside the PPC, which are many and varied. As you may know, Jeff is a drummer who plays mostly Jazz/Fusion and Big Band music, but would love to play some Rock as well. He plays drums in **Under the Lake**, a Fusion band, who perform at various clubs and other venues locally, and **Jumptown Big Band**. He is also subs in other big bands from time to time.

Jeff began playing drums at age 8 (inspired by the Beatles), and attended Berklee College of Music in Boston, where he also learned music theory and arranging. He has always loved singing, and sang in several vocal ensembles in college (at the University of Massachusetts and Berklee).

He has recently joined the **Consonare Chorale**, which is an auditioned choir in Portland that performs a variety of music. Jeff loves to learn new things and challenge himself. In pursuit of this goal, he recently joined the cast of a community theater in Canby in their production of "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang", where he plays drums and percussion. Instead of being onstage, he's hiding in the orchestra pit, which suits him just fine.

Jeff also plays guitar and is learning piano. He has begun teaching drum lessons as well, in his (limited) spare time.



Consonare Chorale

Opportunities to Sing or Listen

If you can't make it to any of the local music events - you can still keep your pipes limber. Here's a fun warm-up exercise from **Perpetuum Jazzile** that you can try:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zpFvDGC9qU&feature=em-subsub_digest

• **August 12 7-9pm 2nd Friday 60's & 70's Harmony Singers at Friendly House FREE**

This is a Meet-up Group especially for fun singing!

<http://www.meetup.com/Song-Circle-Folk-Music-singalongs-from-the-60s-70s/>

• **August 14 5-8pm Jazz, Blues & Soul Food - Old New Orleans style and modern recipes**

Cannon's Rib Express presents "Reggie Houston's C'EX All-Stars". This week it's "Family Fun Day".

5401 NE 33rd Ave., Portland (New Season's parking lot) <http://www.cannonsribexpress.com>

• **August 14 6-8pm Taste of Tanzania** revisited ... Welcome home party for the Tanzania Travelers and friends, featuring Bertha Haas, founder of the Huruma School for Children with Disabilities, who is returning from Mwanza Tanzania. Please come hear Bertha's news, enjoy music, refreshments and Tanzanian crafts, and help support Huruma. On the labyrinth at Mission of the Atonement Church, 7400 SW Scholls Ferry Rd., Beaverton, OR 97008. (This event was sent to us by Mary (alto) and Manny (tenor), who would love to see PPC folks attend.)

• **August 19 7-9pm 3rd Friday Song Circle at Friendly House FREE**

This group is for musicians and singers! NOTE: This month we will be singing from the "Rise Again" songbook! Use the info link from 2nd Friday's Meet-Up page (above) for address, map.

• **August 26 7-9pm Song Circle FREE**

Join musicians for a Song Circle with a view of the Columbia River Gorge. Sing along, play along, or just sit back and enjoy folk and campfire songs. Bring a chair. Meet at **Vista House at Crown Point**, east of Portland just past Corbett on the Historic Columbia River Highway*. For more information, call 503-695-2261 x228. **Suggestion:** COME EARLY (before 6pm) and tour Vista House displays.

*NOTE: Parking may be blocks from Vista House and traffic will be s-l-o-w. **Allow plenty of time to get there and park.**

<http://www.vistahouse.com/>

• **August 28 5-8pm Jazz, Blues & Soul Food - Old New Orleans style and modern recipes**

Cannon's Rib Express presents "Reggie Houston's C'EX All-Stars" This week it's "BBQ Sauce Day".

[See August 12th event for location information]

• **August 30 7-9pm Music Workshop with Laurence Cole and friends**

Sponsored by **Sing Portland!** (\$10 for non-members). Mr. Cole is a singer, songwriter, environmentalist and peace activist. He lives in a musical community in Port Townsend, WA.

Cedarwood Waldorf School, 3030 SW 2nd Ave., Portland, <http://www.cedarwoodschool.org>



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