

PEACEMEAL

| A Volunteer Effort of the Portland Peace Choir |

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Did You Know?

SATB:— No, it's not another standardized test. It's an abbreviation for the most typical structure of a choir: **S**oprano, **A**lto, **T**enor, **B**ass.

Soprano is the high female voice. They usually sing the melody. Since our ears are hardwired to hear higher pitches more clearly, the soprano is usually what we hear first when we listen to a choir.

Alto is the lower female voice. They sing harmony, which usually means lots of work and little glory. You'd certainly notice the difference, though, if they all got tired and left. Altos add warmth and richness to the choir's sound.

Tenor is the high male voice. The tenor voice is relatively rare, which is why tenors are so valued in the choral world. They add brilliance to the sound.

Bass is the low male voice. "Bass" sounds just like "base," and that's what they are: the base of the choir's sound.

Treble is the term used for boys who sing in the soprano range.



Peace Choirs: Is It a Movement?

We've noticed that here in the Pacific Northwest there seems to be a lot of interest in singing for peace, social justice and freedom, as evidenced by the three choirs we sing with in Oregon, the Peace Chorus in Seattle and Emandal in Northern California. This made us wonder how widespread this phenomenon is and what its history might be. I decided to do some Internet research and see where it took me.

While there wasn't a great deal of information about the history of Peace Choirs as a "movement", I was able to get a bit of historical perspective. The earliest reference to Peace Choirs I found occurred in pre-World War I days. Two groups dedicated

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Mezzo-soprano is the medium female voice, higher than alto and lower than soprano. It is not commonly used as a category in choral music, but can be applied to soloists. **Baritone** is the medium male voice, higher than bass and lower than tenor. In many choirs, baritones act as a subset of the bass section. In the PPC, these singers are known as **Blokes**. Blokes are especially prevalent when singers are faced with **SAB**, rather than **SATB** arrangements.

More Benefits of Singing

Last issue we told you about some of the health benefits of singing. But wait! There's more!

- A 2008 study found that on average, choral singers rated their satisfaction with life higher than the public—even when the actual problems faced by those singers were more substantial than those faced by the general public.
- A 1998 study found that after nursing home residents took part in a singing program for a month, they experienced significant decreases in their levels of both anxiety and depression.
- Singing even helps you live longer! A joint Harvard and Yale study showed that choral singing increased the life expectancy of the population of New Haven, CT. The report concluded that this was because singing promoted both a healthy heart and an enhanced mental state.

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to peace, social justice and workers' rights published newsletters which mentioned concerts by their Peace Choirs. The earliest one was published by the Universal Peace Union in Philadelphia, PA in 1912; the second was published in 1915 by the Peace Association of Friends in America (a Quaker group). Flash forward to the present.

I found references to Peace Choirs in many communities across the US and Canada, as well as international locations such as Kenya, Iceland, Italy, the UK and Japan. Many of these choirs are non-auditioned, welcoming singers of all levels of ability, and most are non-profit organizations. Many were formed in response to a conflict or tragedy. The Seattle Chorus was started in the aftermath of 9/11. The Himawari (Sunflower) Peace Choir in Nagasaki, Japan is made up of survivors of the bombing of that city in WW II and dedicate their talents to working for peace and against nuclear warfare. In Kenya, in an area called the Burnt Forest due to the devastation resulting from tribal and ethnic conflict, the Intercommunity Peace Choir was formed to try to bring people of different tribes and ethnicities together to work for peace through song. Many communities across the UK have formed peace choirs to promote peace and social justice; many of these choirs consider themselves "activist choirs" and perform at demonstrations and political events to further their cause.

In addition, I found references to several choral festivals where choirs from across the globe gather to celebrate and promote worldwide peace. Reykjavik, Iceland holds an annual Peace Festival, inviting choirs from around the world to come together to sing for peace. And since 2010 the annual World Peace Choral Festival has been held in Vienna, Austria. Choirs from all over the world participate to promote peace and understanding among countries and cultures.

So, was I able to identify a specific, organized "Peace Choir Movement"? No. But I was able to find many instances of people around the world coming together with the same idea: singing to help bring about peace, end social injustice and promote community.

Sounds like a movement to me!

~Barbara Burnett

We Do Make a Difference!

If you ever doubted that what we do as a choir can have a positive impact on peoples' lives, this story from our May concert, shared with us by alto Barbara Reding, should reassure you that our efforts **do** make a difference. Here is what Barbara told us:

Sometimes we can get caught up in our own performance at concerts and rehearsals, and because most of the folks attending are family and friends, we may not know the impact our enthusiastic singing for peace has on our audience. We assume they just love us, and that's why they are there.

*Publicity for our concerts is done on a shoestring, but we manage to get the word out through our little neighborhood newspapers, Facebook and social media, a couple of event calendars, beautiful flyers, and on a Neighborhood Community Website called **Nextdoor**. **Nextdoor** seems to be working.*

*On the day of our Spring Concert, I was reading through my **Nextdoor** posts, when lo and behold, there was a post asking for a ride to the Peace Choir Concert at St. David's! The message mentioned that the person couldn't get around very well, so couldn't walk to the concert, and wanted to go because she was feeling down what with all the war and tragedy happening in the world. She thought it might do her some good. I, of course, understood, and as we live only a couple of blocks from her house, I volunteered Mike, my husband, to pick her up (...knowing full well he'd be happy to. We've been married a while).*

*She told me at intermission that she felt her spirits lift the minute we started our first song, **Hasrat**. Her spirits continued to soar during the concert, and she couldn't express her appreciation enough on our way home. We now have a friend in the neighborhood, and it changed the concert for me.*

We didn't have a perfect performance. I, for one, could count a dozen places where I could have done better, and hope to do better next time, but the message of our choir: to spread the message of peace, justice and respect and love of our planet, was resonant in my heart, thanks to Liz, and the joy and peace we helped give her.

Thank you all for what you do with the choir, your music and your zeal. It seems to be paying off, at least in the heart of one lovely neighbor.

~Barbara Reding

PPC Happenings

It pays to show up!

While attending the first of the **Portland Symphonic Choir Sings** events, alto **Robin Plopper** won the raffle! Her prize? Two Portland Symphony season tickets.

July 13: Brahms' German Requiem

July 20: Faure's Requiem & Cantique de Jean Racine

\$10 7pm PCC Cascade Moriarty Arts Auditorium

Susan and Darrell Winterbourne are hosting their annual Luau on **7/30** around 1 pm at their home in Cornelius. They will provide kalua pig and chicken, lomi lomi salmon, chicken long rice, Hawaiian potato salad, fresh fruit and punch. Bring a dessert to share. There is no vegan/vegetarian option, but will be great family fun. BYOB if desired. Please RSVP (text) Susan at (503) 476-6753. 501 S 8th Avenue, Cornelius.

Don't forget the **PPC Summer Session, Weds. 8/3, 8/17 & 8/24** at St. David's, and the summer gig at Saturday Market on **8/28**. All are welcome. We will be singing Standards, with maybe a surprise or two thrown in.

Penny Biel will be hosting a **BBQ Potluck** on **8/20** at around 6 pm, at her home, 12424 NE Rose Parkway. Penny is providing beverages. Please bring something to share.

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.

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 Nicole and Penny

When I joined the Peace Choir I was 5'5" -- Now I am 5'3"!

Seriously folks: Grew up in Silverton Oregon -- started singing in 5th grade. Picked strawberries. Sang with Jester Hairston. Went to Oregon State. Spent the summer of 1964 in Alabama. Had lunch with Dr. King, Jesse Jackson and Julian Bond. Taught school in Portland.

Married the great-great nephew of Johnny Appleseed. Lived in the Marshall Islands, Chicago (engineering secretary for McDonalds) and Albuquerque (asst. director in drug education program, suicide prevention program coordinator, hot air balloon pilot, therapist at VA hospital, city police dispatcher). Sang with "The Enchanters". Husband died.

Bought house in Portland. Worked for Metro. Learned computer programming on punch cards. Learned software data entry. Worked for GE, Tektronix and a timber cruiser. Went to work in customer service for Dell, HP and Charter Cable. Retired and became an impoverished cat servant and choir singer.

—Nicole K, tenor

I am a native Portlander and own **Bela Hair Studio** in the Mt Tabor area (<http://www.belahairstudio.com/>). I love music, studied with an operatic vocal coach at age 12, love singing and playing guitar and am learning to play drums. I am a former fitness instructor/yoga teacher and practice Aikido. I am also a Reiki master/teacher, house renovation enthusiast and major dog lover. My husband, Wayne and I have four grown kids and one foster kid.

—Penny B., soprano

Suggestion Box

This is a new section we're adding where you, our readers, can 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.

Soprano Suggestion:

PLEASE give the choir the option to vote one or two songs of the new repertoire OUT.

Some songs are just plain awful!

'I love to hear a choir. I love the humanity, to see the faces of real people devoting themselves to a piece of music. I like the teamwork. It makes me feel optimistic about the human race when I see them cooperating like that.' — Paul McCartney

Chorus Off-Campus

A Place Where People Can Share Their Singing Experiences Outside the PPC

Mary Jo Frank wrote to us about her trip to Chicago.

I am writing this from Chicago, where John and I are attending a national convention of Swedish choirs. There are probably 15 choirs from across the States, and a visiting choir from Stockholm. Each individual choir has a scheduled performance where they sing two or three songs from their own repertoire. But the big deal is the Grand Concert, which will showcase all 200+ voices on Friday night. We'll sing about 20 wonderful songs in Swedish and English. Some choirs are men only, some women only, some mixed.

We also get to learn under the direction of multiple choir directors, each representing one of the attending choirs. Each has his or her own style, and a lot to offer in terms of interpretation, dynamics, language, and technique. Such enthusiasm and talent! Plus, the song selections are just gorgeous. I wish you could be here in the audience to experience this volume of voices, directed by these talented directors. And who knows, maybe I'll introduce one or two of these (in English) to our music committee next year.

Outside of choir activities, we have a scheduled field trip to tour downtown Chicago on Saturday. This is my first stay in Chicago, so it will be all new to me. From what I've seen, Chicago is a friendly and smart city. People do their jobs well. This is also the city where my father was born of immigrant parents 105 years ago, the 9th of 10 children. I wanted to go see the house where he was born, but I discovered that it is now only an empty lot.

I guess I'm a few decades late.

— MJ Franck



Portland Scandinavian Chorus

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-subscriptions_digest

- **July 17 5-8pm Jazz, Blues & Soul Food**

Cannon's Rib Express presents "Reggie Houston's C'EX All-Stars" Local jazz and blues legends and rising stars Outdoor seating if you want to eat – or you can hang around the outside railing. Cannon's is an old NE Portland take-away BBQ sandwiches and ribs joint. Prices for a dinner is about \$12-16. A lot of local jazz musicians tend to drop in and jam – this Sunday in particular as it's in honor of the late Janice Scroggins' birthday. 5401 NE 33rd Ave Portland 97211 (New Season's parking lot) www.cannonsribexpress.com

- **July 22 7-9pm Song Circle FREE** <http://www.vistahouse.com/>

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.

- **July 26 7-9:30 pm Singing Party with Sing Portland! FREE**

"Songs from here, there and everywhere" Some listening and some singing with Marion Van Namen and the SP! gang. Cedarwood Waldorf School in the Music Room. 3030 SW 2nd Ave Portland 9720. www.cedarwoodschool.org

- **July 31 5-8pm Jazz, Blues & Soul Food**

Cannon's Rib Express presents "Reggie Houston's C'EX All-Stars" This week it's "Hot Fun in the Summer Time" [See July 17th event for location information.]

- **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!

- **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.

“Come from a space
of peace and you’ll
find that you can deal
with anything.”

— MICHAEL SINGER

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