



# VOICEMAIL

October 2009

## Letter from England – Part I

Since my first days with the Chamber Chorus I have tapped into my experience as a singer to interpret the repertoire and guide our performances. I had sung in choirs since the age of six and worked for countless directors, observing what was effective, and how best to motivate singers. Of course, I have come to realize how much I still have to learn; working in 'the lively arts' is a constant challenge, and it's essential to keep

one's approach fresh and one's enthusiasm undimmed. So the opportunity to revisit my early training as a cathedral singer was not to be missed, and as I write this I am already three weeks into my year as a 'lay clerk', as the adult singers are called in English cathedrals. I am one of twelve men who accompany the boys' and girls' choirs, and five of my peers are choral scholars, destined to join some of the most famous collegiate choirs in Oxford and Cambridge next academic year. The standard of singing is extraordinary, with the very idea of a mistake in notes or rhythm unthinkable; what we focus on is vocal production and musical interpretation. Leading us is **David Lowe**, who has branched out into choral directing after establishing a reputation as one of the country's foremost voice teachers. Ideas and reactions are coming thick and fast, and I have no doubt that what I am learning here in Norwich will inform my work with the Chamber Chorus when I return.

(To be continued...)

**Philip Barnes**  
Artistic Director



Norwich Cathedral spire

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## The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus

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[www.chamberchorus.org](http://www.chamberchorus.org)

## Check Out Our New Website!

We've updated our website design and added new features, including a Purchase section for buying your tickets, subscriptions, and CDs online.

[www.chamberchorus.org](http://www.chamberchorus.org)

# Message from the President

As the president of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, I am pleased to welcome you to today's concert, *On Second Hearing*, which opens our 54th season. This season promises to continue the inspired programming and high level of artistic excellence that have earned the Chorus recognition as St. Louis' premier *a cappella* choir. The works on today's program will delight old friends and new audience members alike. Have you ever left a concert after hearing a newly commissioned work, or a rarely-heard piece, and thought how wonderful it would be to hear it again? For those of us who have attended St. Louis Chamber Chorus concerts in the past, today's concert gives us the opportunity to satisfy that desire. And for those who are new to our concerts, you are in for a very special afternoon of beautiful music in the wonderful space and acoustic of the St. Louis Abbey, one of our favorite concert locations.

I'll make my annual plea—if you are not yet a season subscriber please consider purchasing a subscription today. Subscribers receive many benefits, including savings over the cost of individual tickets, optimal seating at each venue, and preview letters from Artistic Director **Philip Barnes** before each concert. Should you have to miss a concert you may exchange your tickets for a future concert other than Christmas, or you may mail them to us and we will acknowledge them as a tax-deductible donation.

Our next concert, titled *Music of the Fall* (multiple meanings intended), will take place on Sunday, November 8 at the Community Music School of Webster University. I look forward to seeing you there.

*Barbara Uhlemann*

## Concert Previews

With a repertoire as huge as the SLCC's, it isn't often that audiences get to hear repeat performances, but the season opener puts that right with *On Second Hearing*. . .—a compilation of pieces that we have introduced to St. Louis audiences, and which found a particularly warm reception. It's perhaps surprising that some Renaissance and Romantic works haven't been heard here before, but more understandable when it comes to the series of commissions which came to us from the pens of **Judith Bingham**, **Howard Helvey**, and **Stephen Paulus**. The ideal setting for this music is the St. Louis Abbey, a venue we have enjoyed for many years, and which always provides a warm welcome; it's nice to be back!

By contrast, quite new to the Chamber Chorus is the new Community Music School Concert Hall at Webster University. Our second concert this season offers a rare opportunity to hear its bright acoustic, matched with the comfort and facilities that only a state-of-the-art facility can provide. Taking a lead from the season, the concert theme is *Music of the Fall*, but as ever Artistic Director **Philip Barnes** has punned this title and investigated various types of 'fall.' Thus the repertoire ranges from a mass based on a folksong describing Adam's fall (from Eden), to a madrigal about tripping, to motets by the late Romantic composer **Max Reger** that deal with the ultimate 'fall'—from this life to the next. SLCC Composer-in-Residence **Clare Maclean** will offer her latest work at this concert, written fresh from her recent visit to St. Louis from her home in Sydney, Australia. And true to the spirit of this season's theme, *Collaborations II*, the concert will also feature performances by the Webster University Concert Chorale, led by Professor **Kathryn Smith Bowers**. Kathy shares the podium for this concert with our own **Orin Johnson**.

In December Orin and his fellow Assistant Conductor **Mary Chapman** will direct the Chamber Chorus in the annual holiday program, which this year is titled *A New World Christmas*. The awe-inspiring Cathedral-Basilica of St. Louis will echo to music from colonial Colombia, Canada, Brazil and Argentina, as well as more 'local' offerings by **William Billings** and **Virgil Thomson**. There will be even some old favorites on the program, though 'singing along' is not encouraged!

*Philip Barnes*

## Meet the Singers — Kate Leslie

At 25 years old, **Kate Talbert Leslie** is not only our youngest, but newest SLCC Board member. She is well known to our audience as a soprano with the Chorus since the 50th season and is a welcome addition to the Board.

Kate has lived in St. Louis all her life, growing up in Chesterfield and attending Marquette High School. She has one brother who is 18 months younger. She first started singing in fourth grade when her elementary school music teacher, Mrs. Naumann, gave her a solo in the class musical production of Lewis and Clark. (She was Sacagawea!) After that performance, Mrs. Naumann suggested that she join the St. Louis Children's Choir; in fifth grade, Kate auditioned and then sang with them until she was 16. The Choir offered so many wonderful opportunities! She got to sing at Carnegie Hall in New York, and sang in several venues and in a collaborative multi-choir festival while on a Choir trip to Edinburgh and St. Andrews, Scotland. Kate says that the Children's Choir really teaches sight reading and that has helped her throughout her musical career.



Kate Leslie

Kate's parents have always been extremely supportive of her singing. She knows that it brings both of them great joy. She began studying voice with **Sheila Dugan** when she was 14 and still studies with her today! Kate says she is a fantastic voice teacher and friend, and is a subscriber to the Chamber Chorus. Kate participated in practically every high school choir available, and had roles in many musicals throughout high school.

When she was a senior in high school she auditioned for Indiana University School of Music and was accepted. She studied with **Dale Moore** during her two years there, and participated in some fantastic choirs. Kate decided that "opera singer" was the wrong career path for her as she didn't really like singing solo; she much preferred singing in a choir. So, she came back to St. Louis to finish her degree in Music at Webster University.

She began interning at Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in the Artistic Department when she returned. She joined the Chamber Chorus when she was a junior in college, and began singing with the Chorus for its 50th season. She also began singing for **Bill Aitken's** choir at St. Peter's Episcopal Church at that same time. She resigned from her position with that choir last December to have more time for family. Kate still remembers her first rehearsal with the Chamber Chorus when she was still an undergraduate music student. She felt as if she had been run over by a steamroller during the first read-through for a piece. She had never been in a choir that could sight read at full tempo like that —now Kate says it is one of her favorite things about the Chorus —she loves the first rehearsal for a concert and working her brain that hard!

After graduation, Kate was offered a position as Development Officer and Volunteer Coordinator in the Development Department for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis. So in all, she worked two seasons as the Artistic Intern, and has been in her current position a little more than two years.

Kate and her husband Kevin have been married for just over a year, (they met in high school singing in choir together!), and he just started his first year of law school at St. Louis University. He is one of ten children, so Kate gained 11 nieces and nephews and 12 brothers and sisters-in-law! They currently live in Affton in a tiny house with their Siamese cat, Aria. (She is very vocal, and Kate says she would definitely consider her a soprano!)

This year, Kate was asked to join the board of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus as a singer's representative. We recruited her soon afterwards to serve on the Finance Committee. Kate says "I hope that some of my knowledge about development for non-profit arts groups will be helpful to the board."

*Gill Waltman*

# Noteworthy Notes

## New Season, New Members

Assistant conductors **Mary Chapman** and **Orin Johnson** report that this year a large number of people auditioned for the Chorus, and after hearing many talented singers, we are excited to welcome the following people as full members: **Amy Laemmler**, **Sarah Price** and **Jennifer Brauer** (sopranos), **Maria Forshaw** and **Emily Stubbs** (altos), and **Jay Thomas Hewitt** and **Jeff Kindle** (tenors). These accomplished singers bring a high level of expertise to our group. Each is a well-rounded musician, with excellent sight-reading skills and musical knowledge, all of which are essential to the success of the Chorus.

## Season Opener Picnic

The 54th season kicked off in grand fashion when the singers and board members met at Tilles Park on August 29th. This annual picnic is a great way to renew friendships, catch up on our summer activities, and to meet the new singers of the Chorus. The weather was absolutely brilliant, and everyone had a great time. Thanks to **Mary Chapman** for initiating the first picnic a few years ago and for delegating this year's event to the capable organization of **Megan Roland**, **Kathleen Mead** and **Stephanie Ruggles**, and to our grill-masters **Steve Mead**, **John Clayton** and board member **Dan Ellis**.



Members of the Chorus and friends at Tilles Park

## Spring Soirée Ends Season

May 31 concluded the 53rd season of the Chamber Chorus and did so with some ceremony. The final concert, *Maclean and Monteverdi*, was magnificent, with the added excitement of the presence of our composer-in-residence **Clare Maclean**.

Included in a whirlwind week of rehearsals, social activities and the concert itself, was a Spring Soirée held at Cardwell's Restaurant in Clayton. Singers, board members and guests had a chance to meet Clare and husband **John Carroll** and witness **Philip Barnes** receiving a well-guarded secret from the board—an endowment fund established in his name. We will miss Philip as he takes his sabbatical in Norwich and look forward to a triumphal return in 2010.



Philip being presented with a commemorative plaque at the soirée

## Clare Maclean Thanks St. Louis

We asked our Composer-in-Residence for her impressions of her visit. Here's what she told us:

"Our stay in St Louis was a very special time...Getting a feel for a place with a different history, architecture, flora and fauna was also a great experience, including hearing the mourning dove, whose call I used in *Vive in Deo*...The concert was something new for me, hearing so many of my works performed at one time, and I felt honoured and happy at how they all came together—performed with skill and feeling, and in the order and variety of the pieces, thanks to Philip's programming. Even the timing was significant, as the week was close to our 25th wedding anniversary. We came home with many good memories—thank you all!"

For more information about concerts, tickets or auditions:

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