THE Steiner CHORALE

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STACCATO NOTES

Phil Hedrick, Editor in Chief

Monthly Newsletter

The Steiner Chorale Labor Day Barbecue

by Cindy Simon

So folks, I have been to some fantastic barbecues but I have to tell you, the one we put together on Labor Day 2026, sponsored and organized by the members of the Steiner Chorale, with help from their families and friends, and our gracious host JK Hilbert, will be hard to beat indeed!

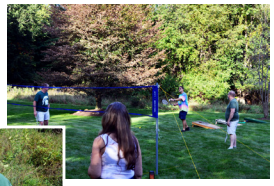




So let's talk food. Oh yes… the FOOD! We're talking about grilled chicken, salmon, burgers, homemade salads of every variety, and the best turkey burgers around! Molly Rebeck, one of several new altos with the chorale this season, shared her culinary appreciation by saying, "As usual, the food was top notch, especially the turkey burger and the Greek potato salad (I need that recipe!)." And of course there were desserts. And a birthday cake. I mean… who doesn't love birthday cake, right? Happy birthday, Jeremy! And what better way to work off all that food than by playing GAMES!



I'm talking about physical, get very sweaty, move-your-muscles-in-ways-you-will-regret types of games. Oh sure, many of us stay in good shape by doing yoga, playing golf, or working outdoors. But, how long has it been since any of us played some "serious" badminton? Or been in a "focused" cornhole competition? Then play for two hours! I think Molly spoke for most of us when she said, "I had never played cornhole before, and hadn't played badminton since I was a kid, and I had a blast doing both." It was worth a few sore muscles.





It was great to see such a good turnout of members and their families, with everyone talking and laughing, enjoying good food and each other's company on such a nice sunny day. It was a fun and relaxing day for all to get reacquainted with each other, meet our new members, and enjoy the day. When I asked another new alto member, Laura Dolson, what thoughts she had about the day, she offered a very heartfelt response I would like to share:

> *"When I told a choir friend in California that I would be moving to Michigan to be near family, she said 'You will love it there — the people are so nice.' Imagine my delight when I attended my first social event in Michigan to find out how right she was! Yes, the food was delicious, and yes, it was fun to see my first cornhole game, but the highlight was the people. Every person I talked to was warm and welcoming. I learned why some love Michigan winters and that one woman's husband was away bear hunting! I found out about good places to spend a weekend. Every person I talked to was willing to connect and chat. I left feeling very encouraged about the prospects of starting a new life here. Thanks so much to everyone, and especially JK for providing his beautiful home for the BBQ. It was a wonderful afternoon for me."* Welcome to Michigan, Laura!

Many thanks to everyone who helped set up, cook, prepare or supply food and drink, shared their gaming equipment and cleaned up afterwards. The event was a huge success because of you. And a special thank you to JK, for coming up with such a wonderful idea to begin with, and for still having enough energy left at the end to sit down at the piano with a few of us and sing through a few Broadway tunes, just for fun, totally unrehearsed, and from the heart. I think that was my favorite part of the day.



In the Spotlight

by Carrie Simon

Meg Carr and Mini Maestros

Meg Carr has been singing in The Steiner Chorale for several years, and we are happy to highlight a new venture she started in March of this year! Meg founded **Mini Maestros Music School** as a way to create an "inclusive and joy-filled music studio where high quality music education can be offered to our earliest learners". After teaching in the public school system for ten years, she wanted to create a Lansing-centered musical hub for private lessons and early childhood music classes.



Mini Maestros currently exists in three unique learning scenarios:

1. Individual Private Lessons - ages 6 and up

Meg offers piano, voice, ukulele, and beginner guitar lessons in her home on the north side of Lansing. These lessons are personalized to each student's individual interests, abilities, and learning styles. Lessons are $30 for thirty minutes and space is currently limited.

2. Family Music Classes - ages 0 to 4

These classes are for our littlest learners, to attend with their grown-up. The weekly classes are 45 minutes long and engage students in movement, singing, and instruments. Families will bounce, shake, and boogie along with a diverse repertoire of songs. The goal of these classes is to create a safe, welcoming environment for children to express and create with JOY. Parents and caregivers are the first and best music teachers for their children. Caregivers will leave with a collection of songs and activities that they can use daily.



Classes are held at University United Methodist Church in East Lansing and are $130 for a 10-week semester. The fall semester is currently fully enrolled, but follow Mini Maestros Music School on Facebook for information about future semesters.

3. Traveling Music Classes

(Daycares and Preschools) - Meg teaches classes at a local Children's Learning Center and works with students ages 0-4 in a school setting.

Mini Maestros Music School

If you would like to learn more about this amazing program, email **minimaestrosmusicschool@gmail.com** for information and availability!

Inside the Music – "O Magnum Mysterium"

by Phil Hedrick

For our upcoming concert, The Steiner Chorale is singing Tomás Luis de Victoria's Renaissance setting of "O Magnum Mysterium". We also get the opportunity to engage in Daniel Pinkham's interpretation of the same text. Last year, The Steiner Chorale performed yet another view on this ancient mystery as we performed Lauridsen's version. That gives us an unusual opportunity: to hear how three composers, separated by centuries, can begin with essentially the same words and reveal something quite different through the music.

"O great mystery, and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the newborn Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the virgin whose womb was worthy
to bear the Lord, Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!"

Listen to the Voices

Victoria's music unfolds through four independent voice parts. One section may introduce a musical phrase, followed by another voice taking up that idea, then another. Listen for the way those lines enter, overlap, imitate, and answer one another. The music does not depend on one voice carrying the entire message. Its beauty emerges as each part maintains its own path while also listening and responding to the others. When several voices finally arrive together on the same words and rhythm, those moments of unity can feel especially meaningful.

Cindy Simon offered a wonderfully familiar way to think about it. She compared it to moments in musical theater when several characters sing intertwining phrases—sometimes answering one another, sometimes expressing the same idea differently—and then suddenly "all come together in unison as if in agreement or mutual understanding," giving the story greater emotional impact.

One Great Mystery, Three Different Responses

Looking back at last year's selection helps make Victoria's approach even easier to hear. In announcing that concert, Gary Cloud described Lauridsen's "O Magnum Mysterium" as "hauntingly contemplative." That description fits the character of Lauridsen's setting beautifully. Its long, sustained harmonies encouraged us to listen deeply to the sound. For me, it provided stillness, wonder, and harmonic weight to the imagery, while Victoria's setting for this concert invites conversation, movement, and relationship between voices. Then, as I was rehearsing the second movement of Pinkham's *Christmas Cantata,* some familiar words stopped me in my tracks: *"O Magnum Mysterium..."*

Only this time the music seems to turn inward. It creates a deliberate hush in the Christmas story — a quiet clearing that lets us pause and absorb what is right in front of us before the journey leaps toward the "Gloria" that follows.

The text in these three versions leads us toward the same great mystery, but the musical experience is remarkably different. When I asked Carrie Simon what she personally hears in Victoria's setting, she gave me another image. She described the voices "almost like everyone standing around the manger—different people witnessing the same mystery from their own places while the musical thought passes back and forth among them". Then something changes: the voices come together to sing Alleluia, as if at that moment, "the light comes through the clouds." Dan LeVeque offered another image for Victoria's setting. He hears each voice part as different parts of a cathedral: the sopranos are the stained glass, altos and tenors provide the architecture, and the basses act as the stone foundation that supports it all.

What to Listen For...

At this concert, I invite you to listen to a few key elements of these pieces:

Pinkham:
Hear how this version sits in the center of a larger Christmas journey and creates a moment of wonder and reflection before taking you into "Gloria in Excelsis Deo".

Victoria:
Try to choose one voice part and follow it for a few lines, then notice when another voice part picks up the same idea and takes it in another direction. Hear the individual lines overlap and answer one another, then listen as all voices suddenly arrive together as the Alleluia begins.

First, different voices gather around the mystery...

then, together, the light comes through.

From the Podium

by JK Hilbert, Artistic Director

Why we sing in a choir



The sheer love of music is why most people join a choir! The human voice is an amazing instrument; it is expressive and can convey so many emotions, colors, and dynamics with a vast range of pitches and articulations. And when we join our voice with someone else's voice we can create harmony or match pitch and sing together in a powerful unison.

The health benefits of singing are many, and some studies have gone so far as to say that people live longer if they sing every day.

But, the number one reason why singers join a choir is that they want to be part of a community, to be a group of musicians who come together to create an incredible choral sound that they can't create on their own. Also, a choir can change the world!

LIFE IS BETTER WHEN YOU SING IN A CHOIR

by JK Hilbert

If you want to improve your breathing, posture,
confidence and listening skills . . .
SING in a Choir

If you want more harmony in your life . . .
SING in a Choir

If you want to learn how to create consensus . . .
Sing *UNISON* in a Choir

If you want to be part of a caring community . . .
SING in a Choir

If you want to express love, hope and peace . . .
SING in a Choir!

If you want to change the world. . .
SING in a Choir!

Stay Tuned...

December 6, 2026

"Welcome Christmas", a holiday concert

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