



# VOICEMAIL

September 2008

## Message from the President



Barbara Uhlemann,  
SLCC Board President

As the new president of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, I am delighted to welcome you to our first concert, *On First Hearing*, which opens our 53<sup>rd</sup> 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. It is a pleasure for me to succeed **George Durnell** as president of this fine organization and I thank him for his leadership and ten years of service as board president.

Our first concert offers a wonderful combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar. It is a pleasure to return to the St. Louis Abbey, a favorite venue for the Chorus. At the same time, every work in this program, from Mendelssohn and compositions from Renaissance Portugal to more recently composed pieces, is a premier. I join with Philip and the members of the Chorus in hoping that you will be inspired and educated by this performance in such a magnificent space.

If you are not yet a subscriber please consider purchasing a subscription to our upcoming season. The Chorus depends on the financial support of season ticket holders. In addition to eliminating the nuisance of having to buy tickets for each performance, subscribers receive other benefits, including savings over the cost of individual tickets, seating in the most acoustically advantageous area 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.

I look forward to seeing you at our next concert, *Bantock and Bach*, on Sunday, November 9 at Third Baptist Church.

**Barbara Uhlemann**  
SLCC President

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## The Saint Louis Chamber Chorus

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## Soiree and Picnic Highlights

Chorus members and many supporters enjoyed two planned social events this summer: a soiree held May 25 after the last concert of the season, and a picnic held August 23 in Tilles Park.

Juniper Grill in the Soulard area, a short walk from the concert, offered a trendy venue for a soiree marking the end of a successful season. **Amanda Verbeck** and **Ann Logan** co-chaired the event, the invitations being designed by Amanda and addressed by Ann in her distinctive calligraphic style. **Joyce Dreimeyer** and **Gailya Barker** helped with the arrangements. **Orin Johnson** and the octet surprised dinner guests with music sporting clever lyrics, mostly arranged by Orin. The big hit was a set of humorous and somewhat suggestive “madrigals” by P.D.Q. Bach. The food, company, and entertainment were a wonderful conclusion to the season.



Singers, board members and families relaxing at picnic

The third annual picnic was organized by **Mary Chapman** at the Skow pavilion in Tilles Park. There was an excellent turnout with lots of volunteers. Singers, board members and their families enjoyed fine potluck fare and food grilled by **Phyllis** and **Tom Pasley** and others, including **Deane Thompson** and **Nancy Bristol**. Mary said that the children liked being next to the playground although there were no fallen trees for them to climb on this year! Despite the hot weather, everyone had fun, and the predicted thunderstorms never came.



Deane Thompson and Nancy Bristol

**Philip Barnes** said that the picnic provides a rare opportunity for singers to meet outside a rehearsal or concert and for board members and singers to enjoy relaxed time together.

## New Concert Themes

That some pieces recently composed have not yet been heard in St. Louis is hardly a shock, but it is perhaps surprising that works written four centuries ago, or by such a familiar name as Mendelssohn, are only now receiving their St. Louis premiere. That is the theme of the opening concert of the new season, and explains the title *On First Hearing*. The repertoire is characteristically broad, from a 14<sup>th</sup> century hymn from Montserrat in Spain, to a brand new piece composed for the Chorus by one of its former members, **Carolee Coombs-Stacy**. She has said that she wrote “Alma Redemptoris Mater” specifically with the vocal color and timbre of the Chamber Chorus in mind, and the resonant space of the St. Louis Abbey provides an ideal setting to hear her rich harmonies. This is a welcome return for Carolee, whose large-scale Requiem the Chorus premiered in 1978, and whose exquisite “God Be In My Head” opens our disc *Singing St. Louis*.

This season and the next have been titled *Collaborations* since they will feature some notable and unusual opportunities for the Chorus to work with other musicians, local and from abroad. This in turn will introduce to our audiences repertoire that might otherwise lie beyond our remit or scope. The November 2008 concert amply demonstrates that scope when we partner with the Concert Choir of Washington University for an intriguing juxtaposition of Bach and Bantock. The choirs will explore widely differing interpretations of Bach, and unite for the majestic cantata, “A Pageant of Human Life,” by Bantock, a contemporary of Elgar and a long-time favorite of artistic director **Philip Barnes**. The cantata will subsequently be recorded as part of a Bantock anthology SLCC is producing with Regent Records.

## Meet the Singers — Bruce Ryder

**Bruce Ryder** was born and raised in the Kansas City area. When he was 10, his family moved to Europe, spending time in London and Paris. He attended the prestigious Merchant Taylors' School in London and sang in the school choir as a treble. This was his first real encounter with choral music and included the highlight of participating in a service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

When the family returned to the Kansas City area, his voice had changed and Bruce was assigned to sing baritone in the junior high school choir at Shawnee Mission East. Bruce says, "My high school choir teacher, **Dan Zollars**, was an inspirational director, and I credit him with giving me a lifelong love of choral music." Bruce was also interested in musical theatre, and performed in several school musicals and local amateur productions.

Bruce obtained a bachelor's degree in French and history at the University of Kansas. He sang in the university choirs and continued to perform in musical theatre. At the beginning of his sophomore year, he switched from baritone to tenor at the encouragement of both his choir director and voice teacher:

After college, Bruce headed for Harvard Law School. The law school sponsored an original musical comedy every year taking a traditional theme and lampooning life at the law school and the legal profession in general. Bruce performed every year and produced the show in his second year. After graduating from law school in 1979, Bruce moved to St. Louis and took a job with the well-known law firm Thompson Coburn, LLP. He has stayed there and is the co-chair of the firm's Appellate Practice Group, and specializes in product liability litigation defense.

The obligations of his legal career did not allow time for musical theatre but Bruce wanted to keep singing. He auditioned for **Dr. Ronald Arnatt**, then music director of the Bach Society joining both that group and the choir at Christ Church Cathedral where Dr. Arnatt was organist and choirmaster. Bruce sang the 1979 Christmas concert with the St. Louis Chamber

Chorus and Orchestra (as it was known then) under **Allen Carl Larson**. Bruce sang with the Bach Society until 1985, and served as its Treasurer.

In October 1984, a fellow tenor in the Cathedral Choir set him up on a blind date with a CPA named **Linda Kinnard**. They married a year later and sang together with the Christ Church Cathedral Choir until 1990. It was there that they first met **Philip Barnes** who had recently moved from England to St. Louis. "We were very impressed with his musical knowledge and conducting ability, and we were delighted when he was appointed Music Director of the Chamber Chorus."

In 1991, Philip encouraged Bruce to audition for him. He has sung with the Chorus since then, although not always as a full member due to the demands of his job. Linda, of course, served the Chamber Chorus first as its Treasurer, and for the past 11 years as Executive Director.

Bruce has found singing with the Chamber Chorus to be truly re-

warding. "First, Philip has assembled a wonderful group of singers, most of whom have much more vocal training and talent than I, and it is a privilege to be able to make music with them. Second, singing with Philip has introduced me to an incredible variety of music. Some of it is standard repertoire but many pieces I would never have sung, let alone heard, anywhere else. These include unknown gems by obscure composers as well as works newly commissioned by the Chamber Chorus. Third, Philip is a superb conductor. His interpretations of the music are fresh and insightful, and in performance he is able to elicit from us a range of expression that is truly remarkable."

The Ryders have two children. Jennifer is a junior at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. Paul is a freshman at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. When not working or singing, Bruce enjoys travel, reading (primarily American and European history), rooting for the Cardinals, and doing genealogical research.

*Gill Waltman*



Bruce Ryder

# Noteworthy Notes

## SLCC Welcomes New Board President

The SLCC is delighted that **Barbara Uhlemann** has accepted the position of President of the Board of Directors. Barbara is no stranger to the board, having served on it for 13 years, the last ten as treasurer.

Barbara is self-employed as a provider of financial record-keeping services to small businesses. She is a lover of music, a season subscriber to the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Chamber Chorus, and loves to sing. Her hobbies include traveling, gardening and folkdancing, especially Balkan line dancing and Scandinavian and Hungarian couple dancing. She is married to **John Uhlemann** and they have one daughter and two grandchildren. We congratulate Barbara as she takes on this new role.

## Season Subscriptions

Season ticket subscriptions will be available on the day of the opening concert on Sept 28. A comprehensive list of how to "Subscribe and Save" is shown on the last page of the season brochure. If you are not already a subscriber, we urge you to purchase your tickets soon.

Individual tickets purchased for Concert I may be converted to a season subscription. **Philip Barnes** says, "If you turn in your ticket stub before our next concert, we'll treat it as a credit against the cost of a season subscription. Join our happy band of choral pilgrims! Sit in the best seats! Receive special mailings about each concert. Feel good about yourself!" Look for **Linda Ryder** at the concert, or see contact information below.

## Composer-in-Residence Update

This is an important year for our composer-in-residence, **Clare Maclean**. In addition to our performances—a US premiere of "In the Year that King Uzziah Died" at our first concert, and a world premiere of her Psalm 137 at this season's finale—she has several other projects reaching their culmination in the Southern hemisphere. The Sydney Chamber Choir is currently recording a follow-up to its first disc devoted to her music (on the Tall Poppies label), and this will include some of the works she has written for us. The Charisma Trio commissioned and performed her chamber piece, "Lai" for piano, clarinet and 'cello, and the New Zealand Symphony has accepted her orchestral piece, "Panah." She continues to teach at the University of Western Sydney, while putting the finishing touches to her doctoral thesis. One could forgive her for viewing her May 2009 visit to St. Louis in terms of 'R & R'!

*Philip Barnes*

## New Assistant Conductor

**Mary Chapman** (soprano) has accepted the position as a conductor in the Chamber Chorus. She joins **Philip Barnes** and **Orin Johnson** in this role. Mary brings a wealth of experience to the position, both as a long time member of the Chamber Chorus and as a church choir director. An article about Mary appeared in the May 2008 issue of VoiceMail. More about her formal background and training will be posted on our website. Congratulations Mary!

For more information about  
concerts, tickets or auditions,  
contact SLCC at:

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Advance Ticket Purchases:

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