



DURANGO CHORAL SOCIETY NEWS

FALL 2022

♪♪♪ NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR ♪♪♪

Ah, autumn in the Rockies! As nature treats us to a dazzling array of color, the Durango Choral Society finds itself immersed in singularly exciting musical adventures.

After belting out your favorite opera choruses with Music in the Mountains in July, we took a few weeks off and have since regathered to prepare some fabulous performances for our loyal audiences.

As we have morphed during the past two years from NO singing to MASKED singing to (finally) BEAUTIFUL, NATURAL, UNRESTRICTED singing, many of us have been, shall we say, “rediscovering” our voices. We opened our 2022-23 season with a vocal workshop in September, where participants got put through their paces on vocal and choral technique. With voices tuned up and ready, we have blasted in to rehearsals for a November performance of Mozart’s majestic, monumental *Requiem* with the San Juan Symphony and 148 singers. Wait, what? 148 singers? Yes, the 68 members of the Durango Choral Society will partner with Farmington’s Caliente Community Choir and the Fort Lewis Chamber Choir and alumni singers for the largest choral ensemble assembled in many years. Come and experience this powerful performance in Farmington on November 5 and Durango on November 6.

What else are we doing this fall? The 18 voice Women’s Choir sounds better than ever, and they are looking forward to being the featured performers on our fall fundraising recital, *Come to the Music*, on Sunday, October 23 at St. Mark’s Church. The evening will also include some of your favorite vocal and instrumental soloists, including Drea Pressley, Jeff Solon and

Adam Swanson, Rochelle Mann, Nathan Van Arsdale, and more. The music will range from classical to jazz, organ, flute, and saxophone, including a sweet arrangement of *Someone to Watch Over Me* sung by the women. We will treat you to a sweet dessert reception after the performance, so plan to stay and visit with us.

Our Youth choirs are back in action as well, with a large and active group of very talented and enthusiastic young singers under the direction of Amy Barrett. You will hear them perform with the adult choirs for this season’s holiday concert on December 4 for the first time in three years. Hooray! And, of course, you will hear and see them perform in the annual presentation of *The Nutcracker* at the Concert Hall.

I am so grateful to our singers, Board members, and staff who have persevered through the disruptions of the pandemic and emerged more energized, motivated, and enthusiastic than ever.

A special thank you is due to our patrons, sponsors, and audience members for your support, encouragement, generosity, and kindness. We cannot wait for you to join us for our various performances this season. I look forward to greeting you and sharing the immense talent of our multigenerational choral ensembles. Check our website, durangochoralsociety.org for concert information, tickets, and announcements.

So, as the leaves fall and our bluebird skies chill a bit, enjoy the SIGHTS of nature’s beauty and the SOUNDS of your incredibly talented family members, friends, and neighbors who sing from their hearts and souls to delight and inspire you.

With joy and gratitude,
Linda

Thank you to our season sponsor:

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What's New?



Christi Livingston, with a smile on her face, as always!



Jill, who also sings with the Women's Choir, will fill in for Christi at the children's rehearsals and their annual weekend camp in October.

It's true. Our beloved accompanist Christi Livingston recently broke her wrist and will probably not be playing with the DCS this half of our season. We know you will miss her as much as we do! Fortunately, the DCS is plum full of talented musicians, so look for Jill Waterman playing with the Durango Children's Chorale (DCC) and the Durango Youth Chorus (DYC). Amy Barrett will accompany the Women's Choir and the Big Choir.

At a Durango Education Foundation event at the Fairgrounds in August, Amy met with parents and signed up children to sing with the DCC and DYC.



Who's On Board?

Please welcome your new DCS Board members:
Jeanie Child, Julia Dodd,
Lars Hansen, and Becca Robison

Upcoming Events

Sunday 10/23: Come to the Music

We are proud to present our talented adult and instrumentalists in a lovely evening recital. Special guests include the Durango Women's Choir, along with your favorite soloists, including Rochelle Mann, Jeff Solon, Adam Swanson, Kyle Osborne, and many more. The concert is followed by a delicious dessert reception.

Saturday 11/5 and Sunday 11/6: The Majesty of Mozart

The Durango Choral Society will join the San Juan Symphony in a triumphant performance of Mozart's magnificent *Requiem*, one of the greatest major works of all time. Tickets for the Mozart are only available through the San Juan Symphony website: <https://sanjuansymphony.org/events/>

Sunday 12/4: Resounding Joy

Our annual Christmas concert will focus on love, hope, and JOY. Join the Durango Choral Society and the Durango Women's Choir, along with soloists and special guests, to ring in an especially grateful holiday season with beautiful lullabies, traditional carols, and a sprinkling of laughter and glee.

For tickets and scheduling details go to durangochoralsociety.org

(Please note that tickets for the Mozart are only available through the San Juan Symphony website: <https://sanjuansymphony.org/events/>

Choir Practice or.....Date Night?

The couples you see pictured here sing with the Durango Choral Society. Every Tuesday night after a quick dinner, they head downtown to St. Marks for choir practice. Gay and Dick Grossman have been members since 1977, probably longer than any other couple. Running a close second are Nancy and Ted Carr, who have been DCS members for over 30 years. Most of the couples have been able to sing with Dave Brubeck, perform the Mozart Requiem with John Rutter in Carnegie Hall, and travel to Europe with Artistic Director Linda Mack Berven and Executive Director Dawn Spaeder as wonderful leaders and tour guides.



Dick and Gay Grossman dressed up to sing with the Choral Society at Carnegie Hall. (Although Dick didn't perform with his baseball cap on!)



Cathy and Paul Duggan at home, and abroad in Venice. Do you recognize Cathy's beautiful quilt work? This month they're in Germany! Along with singing in the DCS, they sing in their church choir.



Carol and Bill Thurman also sing in their church choir; Carol sings in the Durango Women's Choir, and Bill keeps busy with bicycling and as Vice President of the DCS Board.



Abby Bowen and Rhys Schrock have been in the choir since they moved to Durango ten years ago. Joey doesn't sing: in fact, he leaves the room whenever Abby practices at home.



Music is a family affair for Nancy and Ted Carr. Nancy's dad was a tenor soloist, while her mother was an alto and a pianist. Ted's mom was a piano teacher. Their daughter sang in the Children's Chorale. Now two of their three grandkids are members of DCC!



Maestra Linda makes learning fun.



DCS Board Hospitality Committee member Julia Dodd has fun in the kitchen.



After three hours of learning, practicing, and deep breathing, the attendees are ready for lunch!

In September, Artistic Director Linda Mack Berven presented a choral workshop to help people who were rusty after two years of not singing! The highly informative workshop was followed by a scrumptious luncheon buffet put on by the DCS Board's Hospitality Committee. For those of you who missed this intensely interesting and fun day, Linda gives us some pointers on how to practice at home. **And you had better be practicing! The Mozart is one heck of a workout!**

HOW TO PRACTICE AT HOME

1. Breathe deeply and stretch everywhere. Breathe into the muscles you are stretching.
2. Focus on relaxing your face, jaw, and neck. Do not pull your jaw open.
3. Hum a few easy notes in your range, then open to some pure vowels...these are ee, eh, ah, oh, oo.
4. Sing long notes with crescendo and decrescendo on various vowels.
5. Practice spitting out some consonant diction. Speak your music in rhythm to get your articulators going.
6. Select passages from whatever music you are working on in choir, isolate them, and work to instill good vocal technique as well as note and rhythms accuracy.
7. Do not forget to look at yourself in the mirror to check for tightness or clutching.
8. I do not recommend taping yourself singing. It will make you crazy. You will FEEL good (or bad) technique in yourself better than you can HEAR it.



DCS Board Hospitality Committee member Ellie Cline shares a hug with patron and attendee Marti Kiely.



Hold on to your program while Maestra Linda Mack Berven and Maestro Thomas Heuser take you on an aerobic workout with one of the greatest hits of the Classical period. That's right, Mozart's Requiem as you've never experienced it before. You've tried exercise program after exercise program, but face it; you've never achieved the body of work you've always wanted. Well, that's about to change with *Sweatin' to the Classics*, a whole new way to look great and feel great. Go from largo to piccolo as you move your muscle mass to the catchy beat of one of the greatest tunesmiths of all time: Mozart. The one. The only. Sure, he never finished the piece, but if you finish this workout, you'll hear the praise of your friends and the entire alto section. "Hey, is that old Joe in the tenor section?" No, it's a whole new Joe thanks to Mozart and *Sweatin' to the Classics*.

Let's start with the *Introitus*. This is a warm up. Take your time to stretch those muscles. Are you wearing the right shoes? Thick socks? Sweat pants? A pirate's costume? That's it. Work them pantaloons.

Requiem Aeternum. Rest eternal. You won't get much rest once the kyries start up. No mercy, pal. Work it. Smile for the audience, but *you* can step fast as *we* step it up a notch with the *Dies Irae*. Translated, it means the day of wrath, and if the wrath of God doesn't get you sweatin', nothing will.

Now take a little break, but don't let down your guard. *Tuba Miram*, or literally, "look at the tuba." Don't let this one fool you. The bass solo echoes a simple trombone line, and you're thinking, "hey, I can relax." Think again. When the tenor solo busts in we're soon tangled in a complex weave of vocal twister. And suddenly, it's time for *Rex*. Hey Rex. We're going for a walk. And a *tremendous* walk it is. A little breather, time to step high and get the air into your lungs.

Recordare. Remember when you used to have energy to do the things you wanted. Well, you'll have that energy again, as well as recover the body shape you *remember* if you just keep workin' those thighs.

Fast or slow, you'll feel better working out to the magic of Mozart. And besides, we're almost halfway there as the soloists lull you into a false sense of well-being that doesn't prepare you at all for the mad confusion of...*Confutatis*.

You'll be burning up the calories as if you were standing next to the eternal flames, but don't despair; your cries for mercy will be answered with the mellow vocal rendition of the *Lacrymosa*. You'll weep with thanks for an opportunity to catch your breath before stepping up the pace with *Domine Jesu*. And that's what you'll be muttering under your breath long before you get to the end of this one, with a stitch in your side and a song in your heart, as you escape the jaws of the pit of idleness and the darkness of an unhealthy body. Can you feel the pain as you head for the holy light of a healthy and exiting new YOU? Remember, *no poenis, no geonis*.

You can breathe easy for a minute with *Hostias*. Sure, there's sacrifice involved, but think of what you'll feel like a few short weeks from now. You'll pass from a sorry soul sprawled out in front of your computer to a new life of everlasting health and vigor. One, two, whadaya say? Step quam olim Abrahae.

Now just move on to the *Sanctus*. Praise the Lord, as a glorious feeling suffuses your whole body, just the way Mozart intended it to...wait a minute. He didn't even write this one. The Sussmeister is up to his old tricks, and the joke's on you if you think the *Sanctus* is going to be a walk in the park. Sure, it starts out slow, then whammo, you'll find it hard to keep up with the *Osannas*. Suss takes another whack at it with the *Benedictus*, but after several minutes of champagne music he slaps you up the side of the head with another round of *Osannas*.

We're on to the last lap of your total body workout, with the *Agnus Dei*. As peaceful as counting sheep, but the master has his back in the game, and it's in like a lamb and out like a whippet on amphetamines. This last little ditty is one long workout, with twists and turns like an impromptu alibi.

But it was worth it, you've been *Sweatin' to the Classics* and you have become the YOU you've always dreamed of. You feel good. You feel nice. And right about now you are ready for our other great workout tapes: *Hip-Hopping on Haydn*, *Buggin' wit' da Berlioz*, *Bach: The Western Swing Variations* (Deep in zee Heart of Weimar), and *Paganini Punk'd*.

Thanks to RBS.



On a more serious note, here is some very interesting *true* information, provided by DCS Artistic Director, Linda Mack Berven, about Mozart's Requiem.

The majestic and profound Requiem was Mozart's last work, left unfinished at his death. In 1791, Mozart was visited by a mysterious man cloaked in gray who offered him a commission to compose a Requiem Mass. The stranger was actually an emissary for Count Walsegg-Stuppach, who hoped for secrecy in order to pass off the Requiem as his own composition in memory of his wife.

Unfortunately, the young Mozart, who was already very weak with illness and continually losing strength, became terrified that the mysterious messenger had been an angel of death. Mozart began to work feverishly, envisioning writing the Requiem for himself. He became obsessed with his own death, and even raved at one point that he was poisoning himself. (Perhaps this was the root of the false legends about Mozart being poisoned by his rival Salieri).

On December 5, the day of his death, Mozart tearfully told his student Franz Sussmayr "Did I not tell you that I was writing this for myself?" Several hours later, the great genius died at the age of 35, and it was left to Sussmayr, Mozart's dedicated friend and pupil, to finish the work. Sussmayr, using whatever sketches Mozart had left, completed the work from the third line of the Lacrymosa through the Sanctus, Benedictus, and the first part of the Agnus Dei. He then repeated Mozart's brilliant fugue for the conclusion of the Requiem.

Mozart set the twelve movement Requiem for choir, soloists, and orchestra, but he opted for a more ponderous sound than in his other masses, excluding the flutes and oboes to create a darker color. The choral writing reflects the deeply evocative significance of the Latin text, from the percussive shouts of the Dies Irae to the subdued, broken cries of the Lacrymosa and the tremendously powerful declamation Rex Tremendae Majestatis.

When one considers that this magnificent, intense work was composed by a musical genius who was in the throes of obsessive terror approaching his own death, performing and listening to this music takes on a new significance.

The music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is as timeless as the rhythms of life and as brilliant as the collective genius of mankind. I hope that you will find our performance an opportunity to immerse yourselves in the joy of experiencing some of the greatest music ever composed.

We are grateful for everyone who supports the DCS with their generous donation.

Thank you to our season sponsor, TBK Bank

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Thank you!

