



Newsletter – June 2021

Dear OC Choristers:

The Fall/Winter and Spring seasons of 2020/2021 have been extraordinary! Thanks to your hard work, the creative and committed leadership of David Bowser and our talented team of artists and technical superstars, OC created and released 5 videos:

1. Joni Mitchell, Both Sides Now: https://youtu.be/b_DH28-LFgU
2. Leonard Cohen, Hallelujah: <https://youtu.be/h9dRgIJhTPQ>
3. Joseph Haydn, Kyrie: <https://youtu.be/qQ7a9gByQRY>
4. John Lennon, Imagine: https://youtu.be/Fa_KCfKNE_4
5. Craig Hella Johnson, Stars: <https://youtu.be/vhjXRP0fmLs>

In addition to our Tuesday online rehearsals and the release of our videos, we held three formal Zoom events:

Choral Workshop - “Healthy Singing and Getting the Most from the Virtual Process”

This event was directed by Catharin Carew, an experienced professional opera singer, chorister, teacher and clinician. The workshop was held in February, was well attended and very successful. Catharin was engaging, upbeat about the new virtual singing world, and provided much practical advice about singing online and in a choir when we are able to return to in person singing.

Film Event - Considering Matthew Shepard and Oakville Festivals of Film and Art (OFFA)

The OC and OFFA partnership was a first. Thank you to Wendy Donnan and David Bowser for their leadership. Together with the talented section leads, OC choristers and innovative technical support, our musical video “Stars” (composed by Craig Hella Johnson) was created and shown prior to the screening of the film “Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine”. This was an important event for OC as we would have been performing sections of Craig Hella Johnson’s Oratorio this past Spring. While the concert could not be performed, the partnership with OFFA provided the opportunity to honour the life, death and legacy of Matt Shepard as well as all members of the LGBTQ2 community.

Spring Event - “Imagine – Celebrating Choir, Creativity and Community”

With the leadership of David Bowser (Artistic Director), Stacey Sinclair-Zahary (Public Relations/Marketing Consultant) and Lynda Sturgeoff (OC President), we celebrated our season’s accomplishments, formally thanked the Ontario Trillium Foundation for their generous “Resilient Communities Fund Grant” and enjoyed social time with family and friends. The event was led by remarks from Stephen Crawford, MPP for Oakville and Obaro Akpomona, Volunteer for the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Lynda Sturgeoff chaired the event and David Bowser enriched the evening with musical introductions and a sneak preview to the exciting upcoming season’s programming.

Your Board of Directors

The OCS Board has held regular Board meetings during these 2 seasons, and our final Board meeting for this season will be held in July. If any choir members have questions or would like to volunteer and/or take on a Board Director role, please contact Lynda Sturgeoff at any time:

oakvillechoral@gmail.com

The Board's continuing priorities have been to ensure our financial viability and the safety and well-being of the choristers.

Through the leadership and creative efforts of Miriam Clarke (Board Member, Fundraising), we were awarded two significant grants this season and we are pursuing other grant opportunities for 2021/2022.

We continue to evaluate the current COVID environment, and at this time we will likely begin our Fall 2021 season online. We are monitoring public health directives, the science tables and the choir community, and we will communicate with all members of OC later in the summer once we have finalized the plans.

The Board was excited to hold a strategic planning and visioning session in March of this year. We appreciate the pandemic has been exceptionally challenging, however, this year OC has risen to the online challenge and explored many new ways of being. To capitalize on these learnings and innovations, and explore priorities for the future, we worked with consultant Geraldine O'Dowd to confirm our future focus. As a result of these discussions, the Board has a road map for the future that we will review and discuss with the membership in the Fall. Strategic discussion summary attached.

2021-2022 Season

We are pleased to announce that the following accomplished individuals will be our season's guest conductors and performers. Dates for our Winter and Spring events to be confirmed in August:

- December 2021 – Barbara Croall will be our distinguished guest for our December event. Barbara is an Odawa First Nation composer and has had commissions and performances from leading orchestras, ensembles and soloists across Canada, the US, the UK, Europe, Latin America and Asia. As a musician, Barbara also plays, performs, and composes on the Pipigwan and for voice in the traditional Anishinaabe way. Classically trained, she holds music degrees and diplomas from Centre Acanthes (France), the Musikhochschule in Munich (Germany), The Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), and the University of Toronto.
- April 2022 – We are thrilled that our OC Miriam Lea (Clarke) Soprano and David Bowser, Artistic Director, have agreed to be our special guests for the Spring concert event.
 - Miriam will be a guest composer and soloist.
 - David will be premiering his work commissioned by OC for our celebratory Spring 2022 concert.

Thank You to So Many People

We are grateful to so many people for this season's incredible success and we wish to extend our many thanks to the following people:

Section Leads:

- Soprano – Sarah Leung
- Alto – Lydia Harper
- Tenor - Arieh Sacke
- Bass – Joshua McFaul

Accompanists

- Organist – Daniel Norman
- Pianist – Christina Faye

Video/Sound Editor

- Chris Mayell

Concert Video Editor – Film Editor

- Denis Portelance

Video Slides and Choir Communication

- Sandra Litt

Social Media Communication

- Christina Litt-Belch

There are many choristers and people who contributed their time, ideas and financial resources to OC and we are forever grateful.

Please connect and contribute...

This 2020/2021 season was very successful, and we look forward to an exciting year ahead. We strongly encourage OC members to connect, ask questions, provide ideas, contribute and VOLUNTEER.

Please be sure to encourage your family and friends to think about OC as a singing opportunity and we would be very happy to have people try us out or speak to a Board Member about joining this upcoming season. Please get in touch at oakvillechoral@gmail.com

Finally, it was incredible to see everyone rise to the opportunities of virtual singing using never before recording processes, and where possible, included 4-legged friends as support (see attached photos provided by choristers). It all contributed to innovation, learning and fun.

Have a wonderful summer!

Your OCS Board

Innovative Home Recording Studios and Honourary Meow Members of OC

