

ITHACA COMMUNITY CHORUSES



Annual Newsletter

2010 - 2011 Season

ICC chairwoman's report

Our three choruses achieved new heights this year, taking on challenging repertoire, expanding their artistic collaborations, and drawing large and enthusiastic audiences. We celebrated two significant milestones this year, the 35th anniversary of our founding and Gerald Wolfe's 20th anniversary as director of the ICC&CS. We are so very fortunate to have Gerald, Baruch Whitehead, Lorene Adams, and Thom Baker directing our choruses and to have Katie Howell directing our summer choral activity, SummerSing. Their vision, ability, and hard work open wonderful new worlds to us as singers.

Our board members and dozens of others devote many volunteer hours to keeping the choruses running. From registration to rehearsal mechanics to stage management, from ordering music to fundraising to website maintenance, a tremendous amount of activity is required to keep us humming in tune. In my time on the board, I have come to understand just how deeply committed our core volunteers are. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work with them to keep our organization strong.

The ICC will continue to thrive under the leadership of Susanne Morgan, chairwoman, Ken Brown, treasurer, Jack Miller, secretary, and the rest of our very capable board. It is especially gratifying, just two years after the formation of the Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus, to have an executive committee made up of one officer from each of our three choruses. We are grateful to Susanne, Ken, and Jack for stepping up to accept these responsibilities, and also extend our thanks to Tammy Lovell, who served this past year as board treasurer, for staying on as assistant treasurer. The treasurer's job is particularly complex, and Tammy's experience with it will come in handy. I would also like to thank Annie Wall, who renders extremely valuable service as our business manager, for providing needed continuity in the handling of our finances.

Along with inspiring musical direction and devoted volunteer effort, it takes money to hold rehearsals and produce concerts.

We are very grateful to our donors, many of whom have supported us faithfully for years, and to the Community Arts Partner-

ship, which has assisted us for many years through their grants program. But this year was different than any other we have experienced; in addition to our more or less expected annual support, we had the honor and joy of receiving two magnificent gifts from a new, anonymous benefactor. This individual's outstanding generosity provided the margin we needed to stay in the black while featuring full orchestras and professional soloists in three of our concerts this year, and the IGMC was able to take the next step in its development, hiring a paid director. We have also earmarked a portion of these funds for an expansion of our website, a project now being undertaken. To our angel donor we give extra special thanks for putting the wind in our sails as we embarked on a very important and ambitious program year. We feel most fortunate to have had this extra help.

Jeannie Griffith, ICC chairwoman, 2010-11

Treasurer's report

The 2010-11 program year was very exciting—and fiscally successful—for all three of our choruses. We began the year with more than a little trepidation, as we had planned a very ambitious series of concerts, but thanks to the generosity of our donors, community grant-makers, and the local businesses that place ads in our programs, as well as to our successful ticket sales, we ended the year in the black again.

The Ithaca Community Chorus and Chamber Singers, in celebration of its double anniversaries, presented two large and expensive concerts to the "tune" of almost \$23,000, considerably more than in past concert years. Voices Multicultural Chorus for the first time undertook a concert, Porgy and Bess, with a full orchestra, professional soloists, and a guest chorus: this concert alone cost more than \$18,000. Our newest member, the Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus, took the step of hiring both a music director and an accompanist, two positions that previously had been filled by unpaid volunteers.

Our ambitious programming, fortunately, was matched by very successful fundraising. We were the grateful recipients of \$3,400 in public funds from the Community Arts Partnership (CAP) of Tompkins County and a \$500 grant from the Strelbel Fund for Community Enrichment. We give a special thanks to all the local businesses that placed ads in our concert programs—be sure to read our program shell at our concerts and support the businesses that support us! Further fundraising by chorus members included sales of the Waterfall Calendar by Dewey Neild, gift-wrapping at Border's, and two vocal workshops.

Members also participated as hosts in our annual Bed and Breakfast Program during Cornell graduation. Our biggest surprise, though, came in the form of not one, but two very generous gifts from an anonymous donor, which couldn't have come at a better time. Thank you!

One of our missions as "community" cho-

ruses is to give back to the community. Our annual Paul Gibbons Vocal Music Scholarship fund, which is created from member donations, awarded \$706 to the Community School of Music and Arts to provide vocal scholarships to local high school students. To make our music available regardless of ability to pay, nineteen chorus members were given dues scholarships, several local nonprofits were provided with complimentary concert tickets to distribute to their clients, and we performed at several local events without charge.

In all, we produced six major concerts. Member dues, concert ticket sales, and activities such as workshops contributed 60 percent of our income in 2010-11, but a full 40 percent of our support came from our donors, community grant-makers, and the local businesses that place ads in our programs.

**Tamara Lovell, treasurer,
Ithaca Community Choruses**



Chorus reports

Ithaca Community Chorus and Chamber Singers

This year the Ithaca Community Chorus and Chamber Singers celebrated two major anniversaries in great style. The fall semester commenced Gerald Wolfe's 20th anniversary as director, and the spring semester marked the 35th anniversary of the founding of the chorus. Gerald chose Beethoven's thrilling choral masterpiece, *Missa Solemnis*, for his anniversary concert in January, and the chorus and orchestra rose to the occasion with a beautiful performance. The event drew a large audience, thanks in part to the *Ithaca Journal*, which gave us the cover of *Ticket* and ran a feature article. Following the performance, more than 200 singers and audience members filled the church's parlor to enjoy a reception celebrating Gerald's two decades of talented and dedicated service. There was only one way to match the excitement of this concert in the spring, and Gerald found it in Verdi's *Requiem*. Our April concert was by all accounts another stunning success.

For the coming season, Gerald has selected two twentieth century pieces that speak to contemporary issues with engaging, accessible voices. We will perform Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man: a Mass for Peace* on January 7, with rehearsals beginning September 7. In this commissioned work from 2000, Jenkins has interwoven elements of the Catholic Mass with the fifteenth-century folk song *L'homme armé* and text from the Islamic call to prayer, Biblical psalms, the ancient Indian epic the *Mahabharata*, Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and poems by Rudyard Kipling, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and Sankichi Toge, who witnessed the bombing of Hiroshima and later died from its effects.

Next spring's work will be the 1933 *Sacred Service* by Ernest Bloch, which is sung in Hebrew with a cantor and organ. Rehearsals will begin on January 25, and the concert will be held on April 28. Both the fall and spring concerts will be held at St. Paul's Methodist Church, our rehearsal and performance home for many years.

Our chorus continues to attract around 100 returning and new members, young and not so young, each semester. Spirit is high and engagement is strong. Gerald and the chorus were remarkably well supported this year by Alan Giambattista, who will continue

as our accompanist this coming year, and we continued to appreciate the help of our dedicated section leaders, Siu-Ling Wong Chaloemtiarana, Marilyn Crooker, Joe Cooke, and Mike Billing.

Volunteer involvement and leadership keep the chorus vibrant, as always, with many members of our chorus performing vital roles behind the scenes. Our elected leadership was in transition this year following chorus president Janine Willis's move to San Francisco in March. Susanne Morgan stepped in as interim president and I became steering committee secretary. Three months later, Susanne was elected to chair the board of the Ithaca Community Choruses, and I agreed to serve as president of the ICC&CS. Tammy Lovell will continue as treasurer of our chorus and assist Ken Brown in his new role as treasurer of the ICC. New steering committee members are Deborah Campbell, Kelly Doolittle, Adric Garlick, Linda Loomis, and Hilary Dorsch Wong. Dan Taylor, who has done remarkable design work for us, retired from the steering committee at year's end, as did Jeannie Griffith, who also served on the ICC board during her two years as chorus president and this past year as ICC chair.

Among the issues we will address this year is our name. The "Ithaca Community Chorus" was a perfect way to describe us 35 years ago. When our organization expanded to incorporate VOICES Multicultural Chorus in 2002, however, the name "Ithaca Community Choruses" suited us better than any other as a name for the umbrella organization we created. We would like to give our chorus a more distinct name that communicates our unique identity both in the community and in relation to the ICC's other member choruses. If you have any suggestions, please drop us a line at icc@ithacacommunitychoruses.org.

Mary Royer, president, ICC&CS

VOICES Multicultural Chorus

VOICES Multicultural Chorus has a tradition of expressing our love of the rich heritage of world music through major concerts and

musical community outreach. This past year we engaged in several new, exciting, and challenging opportunities under the direction of music director Baruch Whitehead and associate director Lorrene Adams.

Our outreach began early in the fall with a performance at First Unitarian Church in gratitude for the use of their annex for our rehearsals. It is always a great pleasure to perform for this church.

In keeping with our primary mission of promoting community through song, we took part in a commemoration of Kristallnacht and the Holocaust at Cornell on November 7. VOICES sang "Hashivenu" ("Return Us, Oh Lord") as the audience, which included local Holocaust survivors, came into the auditorium. VOICES then sang what has become a somber anthem of the Holocaust, "Ani Ma'amin" (I Believe), also known as "Hymn of the Camps." VOICES accompanied Cantor Abbe Lyons from Tikken V'Or Congregation in the final selection of "Wings of Peace." We sang all three pieces in Hebrew. The ceremony was a very reverent and moving time for everyone present.

Our winter concert, "A Time for Children," was performed at Cornell's Sage Chapel on December 11. Our guest artist, educator and songwriter John Simon, shared his gentle and touching songs, and VOICES had the privilege of backing him on one of his own compositions as well as on the Zulu folk song "Wimoweh" ("The Lion Sleeps Tonight"). VOICES infused the crowd with holiday spirit with "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch," which included an appearance by the Grinch. Inner Voices, the VOICES auditioned ensemble, brought life to Vince Guaraldi's classic, "Linus and Lucy."

Our annual spring concert, held at Ford Hall on May 13, was a sold-out performance of the music of *Porgy and Bess* with full orchestral accompaniment. With Baruch serving as artistic director and Lorrene as associate director, VOICES had the opportunity to perform with a very special guest conductor, Anthony Leach of Pennsylvania State University, and two additional choruses, the *Essence of Joy Singers* and the *Beverly J. Martin Children's Choir*. There were solo performances from Robert Sims as Porgy,

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Orieyama V. Linebarger as Bess, Melanie Grace Gerald as Serena, Ana Strachan as Clara and Strawberry Woman, Jeanette Blakeneey as Maria, Jason La Mar Yates as Sportin' Life, Paris Alexander Nesbitt as Jake and Mingo, Brandon Con as Peter, the honey man, Daniel Bates as Crab Man, Kristina Jackson as Lilly, and Lydia Christine Walrath, Nathan McNeill Murphy, and Steve Wilkins as the ensemble soloists. Our piano soloist was Joshua Condon, a brilliant piano student at Ithaca College who has studied at the Eastman School of Music.

Lorrene directed our spring performance at the Unitarian Church on April 29 and our appearance at the Ithaca Festival at Stewart Park.

Our rehearsal accompanist last fall was J.P. Protonzio, who continually amazed us with his improvisational skills at the piano. Josh Condon took over in the spring and will continue to serve as our accompanist for the coming year.

Baruch and Lorrene bring enthusiasm and joy as well as their musical talents to VOICES each week. They strive to improve our musicality as well as our understanding of vocal music while creating a relaxed atmosphere in which all members feel comfortable learning great music.

Through the music we sing, we strive to present an authentic rendering of the languages and complex musical rhythms of cultures from around the world. To create a unified appearance as a chorus while maintaining our signature colorful look, we changed our concert attire this year to solid black accented with colorful kente cloth scarves that Baruch brought back from Ghana. This presents a beautiful canvas from which our diverse musical offerings can spring forth.

Deb Gordon, co-president, VOICES Multicultural Chorus

Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus

The Ithaca Gay Men's Chorus has had an exciting season with our new director, Thom Baker. Our fall concert, titled *Au Naturel*, was sung entirely a capella, a new challenge for our chorus. The performance was a success,

and has brought the group to a new level of vocal strength and confidence in what we can accomplish.

One of the benefits of having an a capella repertoire is that we now can sing anywhere, and this year we sang in several new venues. We appeared at the Johnson Museum to perform as part of the farewell party in honor of retiring museum director Frank Robinson. We also sang a capella at Sage Chapel in the Soup and Hope series, helping create the mood for a presentation by Jamie Sorrentino, who presented a gay-proud portrait of his life. This July we brought our voices to a half-time performance at the roller derby at Cass Park. In April we appeared with our accompanist, Tom Peters, in the beautiful new lobby of the Kitchen Theatre! IGMC was a musical warm-up for the patrons attending the one performance of the Kitchen's production of *The Tricky Part*. We hope to make appearances at the Kitchen a regular part of our season.



Gerald Wolfe prepares to cut his anniversary cake

Our first fundraiser was a successful and fun party at Oasis with singing by the chorus and dancing by everyone. It included a birthday celebration for Mimi Melegrito, widow of our good friend and member Robin Palmer, who passed away last year.

Our spring concert, *I*, was a return to voices accompanied by piano. The evening included arrangements by Tom Peters of four

selections by female composers. *Taxi Ride* by Tori Amos, with soloist Andrew Hudson-Sabens, *Help Me, Mary* by Liz Phair, with guest soloist Maggie Whitehead, *Society's Child* by Janis Ian, and *Talkin' Bout a Revolution* by Tracy Chapman were hits of the evening. Another highlight of the evening was the solo debut of member Ryan Harrington in our version of *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*.

The coming season will see a change in concert times. Our fall concert is scheduled for October 22 and our spring concert for

ICC Board and Steering Committees 2011-2012

ICC Board of Directors

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Deb Perkins
Jeanne Griffith (ex officio)
Peter Kahn
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Moriah Tebor Shaw

Chorus reports

March 3. Both will be held at First Baptist Church in DeWitt Park, whose supportive congregation has welcomed us to make our musical home there.

This season we have formed a music committee to help Thom with the selection of music for our concerts and other appearances. IGMC is dedicated to performing around the community, and in the coming season we hope to have more opportunities to perform.

Rehearsals began on August 9; we rehearse from 7:00 to 9:30 at the First Baptist Church, 309 North Cayuga Street in DeWitt Park.

ICC Concert Season 2011-2012

Fall/winter concerts

IGMC: Oct. 22, First Baptist Church, DeWitt Park

ICC&CS: Jan. 7, Karl Jenkins's The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace, St. Paul's Methodist Church at 7:30 pm

VOICES: Jan. 14, Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Concert, St. Paul's Methodist Church at 7 pm

Spring concerts

IGMC: March 3, First Baptist Church

ICC&CS: April 28, Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service (Avodath Hakodesh), St. Paul's Methodist Church

VOICES: May 17th, tribute to Broadway, Ford Hall

New members are welcome. No auditions necessary. Dues are \$25 per semester; scholarships are available.

Stephen Nunley, president, IGMC

Gibbons Scholarship

The Gibbons Vocal Music Scholarship program, established in 2001 to honor the founding director of the ICC&CS, marked its tenth anniversary this year. Originally envisioned as a single scholarship awarded to a student of Ithaca High School to further that student's vocal training, the scholarship has grown in size and scope with the growth of our organization from one chorus to three. The members of our three choruses have enthusiastically supported the Gibbons Scholarship's expanded outreach.

This year we collected over \$700 at rehearsals, enough to support several students. In order to ensure that the greatest possible number of deserving recipients would have a chance to benefit from the Gibbons Scholarship program, the ICC this year decided to partner with the Community School of Music and Arts to establish a scholarship fund that the school will award.

Gibbons Scholarship recipients will now have the choice of applying their awards to the cost of either private voice lessons or membership in the CSMA Ithaca Children's Choir. We fully expect that our new collaboration with CSMA will allow our scholarship dollars to reach many more students, and we hope that this assistance will help nurture a new generation of choristers who will love to sing as much as we do.

For information on applying for a Gibbons Scholarship, visit www.csma-ithaca.org/Sch_App_Info.html.

Register online!

It is now possible to register for chorus membership online via PayPal! Go to www.ithacacommunitychoruses.org to join VOICES, the IGMC, and/or the ICC&CS. While you're at it, please consider making a donation!

Go paperless!

If you would like to receive future newsletters and ICC announcements electronically rather than in paper form, please email Tamara Lovell (MTL8@cornell.edu) to be placed on our electronic mailing list.



Ithaca Gay Mens Chorus