



ASSOCIATED MALE CHORUSES OF AMERICA

JANUARY 2003

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REFLECTIONS ON RETURNING GIFTS

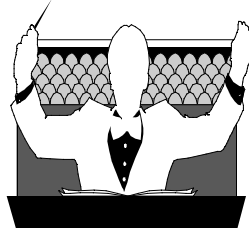
When we go shopping for Christmas presents (or any other presents for that matter), we always make sure we get a receipt in case we bought the wrong size or colour or item. The smart shopper will always ask what the return policy is in the event that an item is not quite right. After 26 years of marriage I know of what I speak; sometimes I get the wrong item.

We all share in the gift of music and when we return it, it becomes more valuable to us. When we return our gift of music, we get to keep it.

Gayle Pohl and the Greater Lansing Orpheus Male Choir have offered us a tremendous gift – the gift of being able to share our music with a great audience and with each other in Lansing, Michigan in April, 2003. The group has already done a tremendous amount of preparation for us to ensure that we have a great time singing and partying and to ensure that our audience has a most memorable experience.

Gayle is concerned though that the gift might be returned – that we do not want to accept the gift that her group has generously given to us. That would be a shame and I hope everyone gets on board soon to attend the Big Sing in Lansing from April 24 – 26, 2003.

THE PROGRAM MASSED NUMBERS



- Salutation* (Gayle Pohl)
- O Canada* (Harry Learoyd)
- Star Spangled Banner* (Gayle Pohl)
- Friend* (Jeff English)
- Make a Joyful Sound* (Don Kreiner)
- Who Are the Brave* (Dan Hill)
- Green Grow the Lilacs* (Mary Trolla)
- Bring Him Home* (Bert Warkentin)
- Away from the Roll of the Sea* (David Campen)
- Amazing Grace* (Charles Jacobson)
- To Love and to Be Loved* (Joe Anderson)
- Soon and Very Soon* (Daniel Kuhlman)
- God Bless America* (Gayle Pohl)

OPEN LETTER FROM GAYLE POHLE

The 2003 Big Sing is just around the corner! How can that be? I hope you are all taking advantage of the 10% discount for registrations before January 1, 2003. It would help us tremendously if we had a close count of the numbers.

Don't forget, during the Saturday afternoon rehearsal, we will have a chance to support our scholarship winners. We are hoping that you will be able to meet several of them.

I need the directors of the mass numbers to give me their Director's Notes so that the rest of us will know what they would like. Please pressure your directors to get their information in.

FYI – Director's and Singers – Baritone entrances will be conducted to the Director's/ Audiences' RIGHT hand side. Directly next to them, on the Baritone's RIGHT, will be the Basses, to the Basses Right, will be the First Tenors and on the very LEFT hand side of the Director and the Audience, will be the Second Tenors. Even though you may be a bass, sitting

with your district and your district is sitting on the outside left of the Director, you will take your cue when the Director points to the inside-right. You will be sitting within your district's TTBB arrangement.

The seating in the Breslin will be such that every man will have a seat and all districts will be seated together so that there will be no filing on or off. How wonderful is that!

Immediately following the Big Sing is the Afterglow – right there at the Breslin. You will not have to drive! Your ticket price includes an oldies dance band, "The Sea Cruisers," who are well known in the area as a great party band used for weddings, retirement parties and the like. There will be food and soda for all.

This event happens only one time every 5 years! Let's make this happen! Keep that AMC of A alive!

CANADA POST TO ISSUE AMCA STAMP

Actually, Canada Post is not going to issue an AMCA stamp. The corporation does offer an opportunity for us to print stamps with our own design. For those philatelists in our midst who would like to receive their own copy of the Chorister in an envelope stamped with our new logo, please let me know by February 28, 2003 so that I may order the stamps to be printed. This will be a very limited run so I don't need to tell you how valuable this will be.

The cost will be \$3.50 CDN.

THE
chorister



Editor
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WE ARE AN ORGANIZATION IN CRISIS!

As we enter 2003, a year that should be a monumental one for the Associated Male Chorus of America, I am stunned to have to write this column. The Lansing Orpheus Chorus of Michigan and members of the Michigan District have prepared one of the finest International Sings I have seen offered to our membership. Over four years have gone into the preparation of this proud assembly of singers from North America with fantastic concerts, breakout sessions, expanded activities for spouses, adjudicated performances, a trade show presentation with music publishers and new AMCA promotional items available for the first time. Yet, to date, we have a scant 40 % of our membership committed to attending in April of 2003. What on earth could we have done to offer you and your clubs a better International Sing? The following questions have to be asked.

-Is this an indication of the general

NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY NEEDED

In addition to the matter of concern expressed above, we as an international organisation are faced with the dilemma of finding someone to fill one of the MOST IMPORTANT positions in our organisation – the Executive Secretary. Representatives are elected to represent their districts to the international board. Officers are elected by these representatives to deal with procedures but the real “glue” of our organisation is the Executive Secretary. Bill Bates has filled the position for the past 18 years – an incredible contribution to AMCA.

Bill announced his intention to step down from the duties of the position over six months ago and, to date, no one has expressed an interest to fill the position. Bill will officially retire after the International Sing. The most comprehensive description of Bill’s responsibilities is posted on the AMCA web site under the Executive

apathy of our ageing membership towards their national organisation?

-Are we content to abandon an established plan of meeting internationally to broaden the strengths of our participating clubs?

-Will this be the LAST International sing for AMCA offered to our membership as a result of your club’s or your personal failure to attend?

As the president representing all clubs, I would hope that all choruses and individuals would re-evaluate any prior decisions and reconsider plans to attend this valuable experience. I cannot begin to express the importance of this matter!

Norm Goodling (President)

Secretary’s Report. The position offers few benefits and a small remuneration compared to the duties assumed by this person. The commitment to AMCA is one that none of us, as elected representatives could do without.

Are you willing to express an interest in this valuable position and to continue this valuable part of our organisation? If so contact any member of the Executive Committee as soon as possible!

We are in crisis but with your support and active participation we will solve these problems before us and continue to survive and return our strength and numbers to the level we once enjoyed as the premier male chorus organisation!

Sing out brothers – In Song!

Norm



SOUND ADVICE FROM DON CROUCH

Did you ever realise that an audience has already judged your performance, singing – stage presence – enthusiasm, before you even open your mouth? Well, they do!

Simply the way that you walk into a performance situation gives the audience their clue as to what your performance will be like. Are you standing straight? Lined up properly? Know how to get on and off risers? Know exactly what is going on and be able to participate without drawing attention to yourself? Follow your director? All of these items, plus others, tell your audience the type of organisation you have developed. Your music will sound sloppy. If you are precise, the music will be precise.

How are you dressed? It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, but it should be neat and uniform. Jackets buttoned or unbuttoned? Make sure you all agree. Matching ties? Tied the same way? Matching shirts? Shoes the right colour and same style as everyone else? Dark socks – not white! Everything visual makes a difference. In an audience, the eye is drawn to something different – something that stands out and shouldn't.

The use of music or folders also effects appearance. Folders should be supported in one hand (usually the left) with the other hand taking care of page turns and balance. Both hands

should remain on the folder or music. All should be prepared to raise and lower folders at a signal from the director.

If we all have our music memorised then what do with your hands? They should be casually down at your sides, not stiff, ram-rod straight. No other way works. Get them out of your pockets, out from behind you, and certainly not crossed in front in the infamous “fig leaf” position. Know what you are going to do and practice it before a performance. Keep your head up and follow your director no matter if you are with or without a folder.

Be prepared to show that you are an artist – which you are!

The only time I tell my guys to be different is if they have to use a cane, a chair or a stool. This should not cause embarrassment. Placement should also be as close to their section as possible. If the section is too far away, perhaps another person from that section could stand next to the person with the stool so they can vocally support each other. It is difficult to sing a part alone.

Look good to sound good! People can't wait to hear a group they visually appreciated and acknowledged before a note was sung.

A SECOND LOOK AT “GRACE”

Don Crouch (AMCA Reviewer)

I first reviewed this song in the group titled “On Your Way to Church”. Since then I have looked at it more closely because of the many enquiries about it. I had selected this for my chorus to perform this year, and now after September 11, it is one of the best choices I've made. Here is a review that is slightly expanded from the original.

“Grace”; arranged by Mark Hayes (TTBB Beckenhorst Press PB 1599 (1993/2000) \$1.65

POSITIVE

- Familiar melody in “The Water is Wide” and “The Gift of Love”.
- Text is a variation of “Amazing Grace”.
- Strong audience appeal with older melody and text with contemporary harmony.
- Interesting blues or jazz harmony without losing folk quality.
- Would fit into almost any performance situation.

NEGATIVE

- An accompanist's nightmare
- Will need a page – turner and perhaps one more hand.
- Accompaniment occasionally gets in the way of the singer.
- Will take extra time to learn the dissonance in the voice parts.