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2022-2023

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The albany CHORALE

The mission of the Albany Chorale is to establish, conduct and maintain a choral music society to entertain and to educate the public. Its further mission is to offer new or less familiar works, as well as old favorites, and to make this music available and affordable to all members of the community.

The Albany Chorale is a community chorus with singers of different ages and backgrounds, as well as a mixture of trained and amateur voices. The Chorale welcomes anyone, high school age and older, who loves to sing choral music. It has become a versatile ensemble with the ability to perform all types of music. Our season runs from August through May.

ALBANY CHORALE'S RICH HERITAGE

On October 27, 1929, Albany's first community choral organization gave its first concert at the Albany Theater. Founded and conducted by J.B. Edings, choir director for St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the 50-voice Albany Choral Club performed for an audience of 2,000, concluding with the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's Messiah.

Those who have seen choral music prosper in Albany for almost 40 years may be surprised by its precarious beginnings, as described by Patricia Yost in "The History and Development of the Albany Community Chorus." The Depression, along with the relocation of Mr. Edings from Albany to Macon, put an end to the first community chorus after only two years.

It took another fifteen years for another chorus to emerge, this time in the form of the Albany Men's Chorus. Though this group was popular throughout Southwest Georgia, it too disbanded after seven years. In the meantime, however, the Albany Women's Chorus had appeared on the scene and continued for almost a decade.

In 1961, the Men's Chorus was revived and later that year joined the Women's Chorus to form the Albany Community Chorus. The union was not an altogether happy one, however, and the two groups soon went separate ways.

Albany's community chorus as we know it today began in 1966, when Albany Junior College opened its doors. Dr. Ed Tarratus and Mr. Larry Dorminey, two faculty members, reassembled the Albany Community Chorus, and the group has continued without interruption since then.

In 1991, the group hired Jill Usry-Boyd as its first full-time director with an annual contract and changed its name to The Albany Chorale. In succeeding years, the Chorale performed extensively in Southwest Georgia and in 1994, toured Central Europe, arriving home just in time for the Flood of '94. The group also began seeking grants and holding an annual fundraiser to help cover expenses. For many years, the Chorale has sponsored vocal music scholarships for college students and high school seniors to promote the continuance of fine music in the Albany area.

Today's Chorale is proud of its heritage and takes pleasure in presenting familiar favorites to its audience, as well as enhancing their musical experience with less familiar choral works.

*By Jocie Gorecki
Albany Chorale Member*

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHORAL MUSIC

“Choral music is not one of life’s frills. It’s something that goes to the very heart of our humanity, our sense of community, and our souls. You express when you sing your soul in song. And, when you get together with a group of other singers, it becomes more than the sum of the parts. All of those people are pouring out their hearts and souls in perfect harmony, which is kind of an emblem for what we need in this world when so much of the world is at odds with itself - that just to express, in symbolic terms, what it is like when human beings are in harmony – that’s a lesson for our times and for all time. I profoundly believe that. And, musical excellence is, of course, at the heart of it. But, even if a choir is not the greatest in the world, the fact that they are meeting together has a social value, it has a communal value, and I always say that a church or a school without a choir is like a body without a soul. We have to have a soul in our lives. And, everybody tells me who has sung in a choir that they feel better for doing it. That whatever the cares of the day, they may meet after long days at school or work – that somehow you leave your troubles at the door, and when you’re sitting there making music for a couple of hours at the end of the day, that’s the only thing that matters at that moment and you walk away refreshed, you walk away renewed. And that’s a value that goes just beyond the music itself. Of course, as a musician, I put the music at the heart of it, but all of these other values just stand out as a beacon. I think our politicians need to take note (my gosh, do they ever?) and our educators, those who decide education budgets, church budgets, just need to remember it’s not a frill, it’s like a great oak that rises up from the center of the human race and spreads its branches everywhere. That’s what music does for us, and choral music must stand as one of the supreme examples.”

John Rutter(1945 -)

British composer, conductor, editor, arranger
and record producer, mainly of choral music.

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2022-2023**

**October 20, 2022
An evening with John Rutter
Gloria**

and Anthems by John Rutter

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**December 15, 2022
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**March 25, 2023
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**May 4, 2023
A Glorious Gospel**
Robert Ray's Gospel Mass
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*Psalm 96:1 "Sing unto the Lord, bless His name,
Show forth His salvation from day to day!"*

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Travis Kern – Artistic Director

Travis is the husband of Robin Kern and father of two young men, Kellen and Aidan. A retired educator with 28 years of experience, he spent the last 25 years at Colquitt County, where he was director of Choral activities at CCHS for the last 10 years. Under his direction, the Colquitt County High School A

Cappella choir was invited to perform at the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., the Kawaihae church in Honolulu, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and the St. Mark's in Venice. Travis has conducted the A Cappella choir in Italy, France, Scotland, Austria, England and the Czech Republic. He is the Artistic Director for the Albany Chorale and the Director of Music at First United Methodist Church in Moultrie, Ga. He has also spent the past 30 years as a director of musical theater and an accomplished thespian. Seeking a different challenge, he has accepted a position as a Graduate Assistant in pursuit of his M.M. in Choral Conducting at VSU.



Meri Beth Hillard – Accompanist

Meri Beth was born in Spokane, Washington, and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She began her piano studies at an early age and studied music at both The University of New Mexico and Calvin College. Currently, she is active as a teacher, performer, and church musician. As music/youth assistant at First United Methodist Church in Albany, she directs the youth choirs, plays for the sanctuary choir, and assists in the worship services.

She accompanied music majors as well as the college choir at Darton State College for twenty years and has operated a private piano studio as well. She has accompanied The Albany Chorale for the past thirteen years. Meri Beth lives in Albany with her husband, Dr. Claire Fox Hillard, they have three children: Jessica (and husband, Tim Morris), Kelsey (and husband, Blake Davis) and C.J. (and wife, Ann Marie); and six grandchildren, Sadie, Sally, Hudson, Jack, Milo and Riggs.



Robert Ray – Gospel Mass

Years ago when Robert Ray sat down to write Gospel Mass, he planned it to be an experimental work. Expecting it to be a one-time performance.

To his surprise the hip, gospel style piece caught on and became a seminal work of African-American music, performed by choirs and churches all over the world.

There's no doubt in Ray's mind that God played a role in the writing of his now famous Mass, which sets the words from the Catholic Mass to the rhythm and harmony of African-American music. "God controls everything I do," said Ray, "It was written in about a two-week period. The hard part for me was not being a formally trained composer. The creativity was a result of divine inspiration. He was working with me."

Antonio Vivaldi - Gloria

The Gloria in D is probably one of his best-known sacred works, but it also reflects Vivaldi's other skill as an opera composer, which he regarded as a distraction from his day job at the Pieta. Venice in the early 18th century was the pleasure center of Europe, and a visit to the opera was part of the court and social life of the city.

Despite a licentious reputation, the opera houses were required to close for all important religious festivals and Saint's Days. But Venetians and their visitors still wanted to be entertained. Vivaldi's all-women orchestras and choirs were legendary sensations, but the girls needed to be protected from noblemen and travelers to the city. To keep them sheltered from the corruption and decadence of the visiting public, the girls sang from the upper galleries of the church, hidden behind the patterned grills, which only added to the theatrical sense of drama matched by Vivaldi's music. Those young men in Venice for a stop on the Grand Tour flocked to Vivaldi's church to hear these mysterious women seen only in silhouette, but sounding like angels.



John Rutter – Gloria

The vibrant and energetic Gloria is a cornerstone of the modern choral repertory. Drawn from the Ordinary of the Mass, the Latin text is exalted, devotional, and jubilant by turns, and the musical setting is based on one of the Gregorian chants associated with the text.

John Rutter's compositions embrace choral, orchestral and instrumental music, and he has edited or co-edited various choral anthologies. Rutter's music is eclectic, showing the influences of the French and English choral traditions of the early 20th century as well as of light music and American classic songwriting.



MEMBERSHIP

The Chorale welcomes anyone, high school age and older, who loves to sing choral music. New singers are welcome to join at any time. Our season runs from August through May.

Rehearsal Time: Monday, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

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SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The Albany Chorale will award up to two (2) scholarships in the amount of no less than \$400 each, in May 2022 for graduating high school seniors.

The scholarship is limited to a senior currently enrolled in a high school (public, private, or home school), in the surrounding counties who will be graduating in May 2023. The student must be planning to attend college during the 2023-2024 school year and considering a major in music.

Minimum scholarship awarded \$400.00.

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Complete the application and mail it with an official school transcript or most recent report card, and letters of recommendation from your two references and mail to the address above. Grammar, spelling and presentation will all be considered in addition to the answers to the questions. All applicable materials must be post marked, no later than April 25, 2023.

SUPPORT THE ALBANY CHORALE

The Albany Chorale is a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation, and all contributions, grants and ticket revenues received enable the Chorale to continue its stated mission.

Contributions help the Albany Chorale continue to provide quality choral performances in this area, as well as help us support local high school seniors with vocal music scholarships.

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