



May 13, 2010

Dear High School Music Teacher,

Last fall I became the director of the Milwaukee Youth Chorale, at the same new artistic director Carol Storck and several other new directors came on board MCC. We have spent the year getting to know each other, the organization, its choirs and choir members. We have reviewed all levels of MCC programming. It's been a rewarding experience and we look forward to building next year's choir program. To that end, we are hoping you will

Send us your singers!

With your help can we make this happen. Will you help us?

We are now auditioning singers for the 2010-2011 school year. After you read this letter, we hope you will send us any singer (or singers, so they can carpool!) you think would benefit from membership in our high school level Youth Chorale. Please fill in the attached referral sheet and send it to us right away. If you prefer, call me (cell: 414-526-2287) or send an email to me at jclark@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org.

Our best singers – whether they are first graders or graduating seniors – tell us they have fun in MCC and love being there because they enjoy the challenge of learning music and the thrill of performing it well. After year-long discussions about what our Youth Chorale needs to offer its singers and the community, we are making several commitments to you and the singers you send our way:

Our commitments:

- **To provide a challenging "honors" choir level experience, including performing upper level high school and some college level repertoire.** Although repertoire for next year has not yet been finalized, it will include not only literature drawn from the classics but also at least one piece specially commissioned by MCC as part of a national consortium.
- **To help our singers become self-sufficient and confident musicians.** We want them to be able to leave high school ready to sing their whole lives, whether they plan to sing in a college choir, or pursue a professional singing career, or become a music teacher, or want to join a church or community choir. We have inserted more work on basic music fundamentals, including sight-reading, ear training, and music theory work. In addition, we provide written feed back on student work throughout the year and during the beginning and end of the year audition process.
- **To provide our singers with performance experiences they can get no where else.** This year the Youth Chorale performed with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Milwaukee Choristers and the Master Singers. Our treble high school

singers performed twice with the Milwaukee Ballet (*The Nutcracker* and *Peter Pan*). Next year's Youth Chorale performance experiences are the best we have ever been able to offer. **For the very first time our singers have been asked to sing with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and its Chorus!** We will also share the stage again with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra and guest choirs. And we begin planning for a tour the summer of 2012.

- **To be a part of comprehensive and sequential learning environment spanning all school age youth.** At all levels MCC staff share a common teaching philosophy. Sequential learning provides building blocks, and from the youngest singers (4 year olds starting this fall) to graduating high school seniors, the philosophy will be the same. Attached is our updated biography, which reflects some of that philosophy.
- **To remain committed to the principle that school comes first.** Our students are expected to be leaders in their school music programs. They are required to be members of their high school choirs (unless school scheduling prohibits it or they play in an orchestra or band instead.) If you ever hear of one of our choir members choosing MCC rehearsals/performances instead of yours, please let us know!
- **To never forget to work with the whole child, or that choir is a team sport.** Our choir members often tell us how important it is for them to surround themselves with like-minded youth who want to excel as part of our choir. And you know that although they don't always articulate it, choir is teaching them life skills. We also know that choir is not a place to develop "stars;" instead each member brings unique qualities and it is ultimately the choir "team" that matters.

Over time we will continue to develop and polish these commitments. You can help us:

1. Send us singers! The more singers you send our way – and the stronger those singers are – the more we can meet our commitment to you and them.
2. Let us know what you think of our commitments . . . we are lifelong learners and want to grow as teachers and an organization.
3. Let us know how we can help you. When you send your students our way, we in turn strengthen your school program. But there is probably more we can do.

We've been thinking about #3 a lot. We know the work you do makes what we do possible. We've been wondering how we can give back to you. Knowing school budgets are generally a problem, one idea we had was to make our music library available to you for loan. We've posted our library inventory on our website at the educators' page. If you want to borrow music and we have it available, we are happy to loan it.

A recent national survey showed the powerful impact choir has on children. We enclose a copy – feel free to make copies and hand them out to the parents of all your choir members! Our executive director is on the board of directors of Chorus America (which sponsored the study). She would gladly speak to school administrators or parents about the important role choir plays in the life of a child.

Do you have other ideas of ways MCC can help you? If so, let us know. We all care about the same thing – helping today’s children learn and grow through the power of music.

Finally, for your general information, I attach a sheet with some of the accomplishments MCC has made over the past year. It’s been a jam-packed year filled with learning and growing. Having seen the positive momentum that has been created through our work this year, I am very excited to see where our work will take us next fall!

We hope you have a wonderful time finishing your school year. Thank you for all you do for Milwaukee’s young musicians!

Sincerely,



Jason Clark
Milwaukee Youth Chorale

- Attachments:
- Referral form
 - MCC biography
 - Choral Impact Study summary
 - 2009-2010 accomplishments



MCC treble singers and MSO Chorus members heading backstage before Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms. Next year our high school Youth Chorale will also perform with the Symphony and its Chorus. We hope one of the singers will be a student from your high school!

Now offering
early childhood
music classes.

From simple singing games to complex works of the masters, we educate. Quality repertoire. Comprehensive musicianship. Choral artistry. Fun. We are Milwaukee Children's Choir.



Now accepting singers

ages 4-18 for the fall 2010. Convenient locations.
Register by June 1 for the early bird discount.

Call **414-221-7040** or email membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org.



**Milwaukee
Children's Choir**
Building Noteworthy Character

www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org



Milwaukee
Children's Choir

158 North Broadway
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414.221.7040

Teacher Referral Form

Please send form to Milwaukee Children's Choir at the address above. You may also fax the form to 414-221-7041, call us at 414-221-7040, or send an email with information to membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org. Thank you!

Teacher's Name:

School/position:

School address/city/zip:

email (work):

email (home):

phone (work):

phone (home):

Student's Name

Grade

School

Address/City/Zip

Phone Number

Email Address

Parent/Guardian

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Milwaukee Children's Choir biography
May 10, 2010

**From simple singing games to complex works of the masters, we educate.
Quality repertoire. Comprehensive musicianship. Choral artistry.
We are Milwaukee Children's Choir.**

For 16 years MCC has provided children with exceptional choral music education, and has given its members performance experiences they can get no where else—experiences that not only teach valuable life skills but will be remembered for a lifetime. Founded in 1994 by Emily Holt Crocker, since July 2009 MCC has been under the artistic leadership of artistic director Carol Storck.

Milwaukee Children's Choir is Southeastern Wisconsin's premier professional children's choir. It has programs for children of all school ages. Rehearsals are educational, child centered, age appropriate, and fun, and teach not only music but also important life skills such as poise, self-confidence, self-discipline, focus, memory, problem solving, and teamwork.

MCC's staff consists of some of the most talented music educators and performers in the Milwaukee area, and is a group of individuals known not only for their musicianship and passion for quality music education, but also for their leadership in the field of music. Several key Kodaly concepts are integrated into the teaching curriculum: singing as the basis for music education, folk music for beginning singers, use of solfege, performing highest quality music, developing the complete musician, and using sequenced curriculum. As staff prepare for rehearsals, careful attention is paid to each of these concepts.

MCC's commitment to excellence and the Milwaukee community leads to strong performance demand. It performs regularly throughout the year at concerts for friends and families. It also performs often as guest artist. As then Milwaukee Journal Sentinel critic Tom Strini wrote in July 2009, "MCC has become a prestigious, stable organization and a go-to group for the likes of the Milwaukee Symphony and Present Music." MCC is a member of the United Performing Arts Fund, and its relationship with the area's finest performing arts organizations leads to once-in-a-lifetime performance opportunities for its singers.

Recent examples include choir members providing the "lovely chorus of young voices" in Milwaukee Ballet's *The Nutcracker* (Elaine Schmidt Journal review December 2009), and the opportunity to sing side by side with the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, where the singers produced musical chords that "drifted through Uihlein Hall like glowing angels" (Third Coast Digest critic Tom Strini MSO review April 2010). *Stravinsky* singers spoke of the adrenaline rush one gets when singing on stage with the MSO and the fact that they will never forget the experience (singer comments on www.facebook.com/MilwaukeeChildrensChoir.) MCC provides these experiences and others like them every year.

MCC activities are firmly rooted in its mission: "to provide exceptional choral music instruction and performance experiences that foster creativity, personal expression and social growth." A recent independently researched study shows that choral singing has a clearly positive impact on children. Children who participate in choruses demonstrate better overall academic performance and advanced social skills. MCC is pleased to provide an essential resource that gives children the opportunity to develop their artistic, academic, and social skills. Through instruction and performance MCC changes children's lives, one voice at a time.

MCC has rehearsal sites throughout the Milwaukee Metropolitan area. Choir members sing in five divisions: Prelude Choir (beginning choir grades 1-3); Cantabile (training choir grades 4-8); Cantare (advanced treble choir grades 5-8); Jubilate (chamber ensemble drawn from Cantare or Milwaukee Youth Chorale, grades 6-12); and Milwaukee Youth Chorale (experienced mixed ensemble grades 9-12).

MCC's outreach program – the "Harmony Program" – brings quality choral music instruction and performance experiences to roughly 200 children who live in the City of Milwaukee and attend Milwaukee schools. These children receive weekly choral music instruction in and out of the classroom, and participate in MCC's spring *Roots & Wings Celebration*.

MCC typically produces five concerts each season, using some or all of its choir divisions at each concert. Each concert is themed with musical selections guaranteed not only to educate and inspire audiences but also to motivate and develop the young musicians in the choir. Repertoire is challenging, diverse, rich and rewarding. It is drawn from the classical masters, from more contemporary choral masters, and from diverse cultures and a wide variety of musical styles including classical, popular, folk, and patriotic music.

Other performance highlights of this season include guest appearances with Present Music at its *Thanksgiving Concert*, with Festival City Symphony at its *Holiday Pajama Jamboree*, with Milwaukee Ballet in *The Nutcracker* and in the world premiere of Michael Pink's *Peter Pan*, and with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*. MCC returns to the stage of Uihlein Hall with the MSO and its Chorus June 4-6 for a performance of Mahler's 3rd Symphony. Other recent guest appearances include *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (National Tour performances at Uihlein Hall), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (with Milwaukee Ballet), *Carmina Burana* and Mahler's 8th Symphony (with the MSO), and Mequon's *Gathering on the Green* (Main Stage Guest Artist).

Milwaukee Children's Choir records on a regular basis. Its most recent CD, *Climbing Higher*, went on sale in December 2008. MCC is featured in Macmillan McGraw-Hill's *Spotlight on Music* school series, performing over 100 songs from around the world, including over 40 non-English songs. The choir also tours regularly, most recently to the Toronto International Choral Festival and to Europe as part of the Rhapsody Prague Children's Music Festival.

MCC Successes 2009-2010

(as of May 7, 2010)

On July 1, 2009 Milwaukee Children's Choir invested in its future and the future of Milwaukee's youth by hiring its first full-time artistic director. Since that date we have had many successes.



**Milwaukee
Children's Choir**

Building Noteworthy Character

158 North Broadway, Milwaukee WI 53202

www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org

mcc@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org

(ph) 414-221-7040 (fax) 414-221-7041

Artistic Director Carol Storck

Founder Emily Holt Crocker

Executive Director Deborah Patel

Improvements to education program

- ✓ High quality artistic staff hired and stable
- ✓ Written curriculum at all choir levels
- ✓ Renewed dedication to sequential learning
- ✓ Investment in new music repertoire
- ✓ Closer relationship with area schools

Signs of choir growth potential following years of decline

- ✓ Over 10% growth in Prelude Choir (our youngest singers and our future) this year over last
- ✓ January 2010 enrollment three times that of 2009
- ✓ Spring audition day full, as we register singers for 2010-2011

Performance successes

- ✓ Continued strong collaborations with area performing arts groups
- ✓ Sold out December show
- ✓ Positive feedback from *The Nutcracker* singers, positive Journal Sentinel review, and more than one orchestra member says this year's *Nutcracker* singers were the best ever
- ✓ School enrollment at maximum capacity for spring *Roots & Wings* choir festival
- ✓ Record attendance at *Roots & Wings* concert, with positive feedback from concertgoers and choir members
- ✓ Record number of singers participate in spring education concert with MSO, positive feedback from singers, and musician tells MCC that this year's singers were the strongest ever
- ✓ Positive reviews of MCC's performance in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* with the MSO, and positive feedback from Symphony Chorus and MCC members

Improved outreach program

- ✓ Review of outreach leads to new program, with Harmony Choirs in five Milwaukee schools
- ✓ Harmony Choir reaches 200 singers – three times more students – at lower cost per child
- ✓ Harmony Choir generally serves students who otherwise would have NO music program at school
- ✓ All five Harmony Choirs send singers and teachers to *Roots & Wings*
- ✓ Overwhelmingly positive response to Harmony Choir, from both children and schools

Demographics meet mission

- ✓ Serve more students today than in recent history – more than 450 youth served
- ✓ Singers represent 55 zip codes, 38 communities, seven counties
- ✓ Singers represent grades 1-12 from more than 140 schools
- ✓ More than 30% of youth served are non-Caucasian or of mixed race

Strong and strengthening infrastructure

- ✓ Engaged board with working committee structure
- ✓ Stable, dedicated and competent administrative staff team
- ✓ Nonprofit Management Fund (NMF) Diagnostic performed and results carefully considered
- ✓ NMF consultant assisting with board development
- ✓ MCC has cash in the bank to help weather the current financial challenges caused by economy and transition

Why it matters: See reverse side for results of a recent national study measuring the impact of choral singing on children.

Singing in a Chorus is a Launch Pad for Success — in School and in Life

Today, almost a quarter of American households have an adult or child who belongs to a chorus. That's nearly 43 million people—which makes choral participation the highest among all the performing arts.¹ The broad appeal of choral singing is based in the unsurpassed opportunity it gives each singer to participate in an activity that involves them artistically, builds community, enhances skills, and results in a product of great beauty.

Choral singing provides an extraordinarily accessible entry point for arts exposure, with fewer barriers to participation—economic, cultural, and educational—than those posed by other art forms. The voice is a readily available instrument, and the cost to successfully participate in a choir tends to be lower than other instrumental music programs.

In 2009 Chorus America's Chorus Impact Study explored the value of choral singing for children. Conducted by Grunwald Associates LLC (Bethesda, MD), the study surveyed 2,053 adult choral singers, 500 members of the general public, 500 parents of children ages 6-17, and 300 K-12 educators across the United States to learn more about the role of chorus participation in children's education and development. The researchers found that choral singing provided a road to academic success and life skills for children. The statistics were striking.

What Parents Observe

While choir is not the only extracurricular activity their children participate in, parents surveyed could very clearly date their child's improvements in a variety of areas to their joining a chorus:

- 61% of choir parents say their child's overall academic performance improved after he or she became a member of a choir.
- 70% of parents said their child has become more self-confident, more self-disciplined, has developed better memory skills, and has become a better listener since joining a choir.
- 60% of parents say their child's ability to read others' emotions or manage their own has improved since their child joined a choir.
- 63% say that since joining a choir their child completes chores and assignments more promptly and completely.

What Teachers Observe

- 80% of educators surveyed agree with parent assessments that choir participation can enhance numerous aspects of a child's social development and academic success, including better grades.
- 75% of teachers surveyed said they can tell which students in their classes participate in choirs, just by observing their behavior.
- 90% of teachers (across academic disciplines) believe choral singing can keep some students engaged in school who might otherwise be lost—this is particularly true of teachers (94%) who describe the ethnicity of their schools as diverse.

Choral programs are at risk

The Chorus Impact Study uncovered some unsettling news: Choral singing opportunities for children and young people are declining.

- More than one in four educators say there is no choir program in their schools.
- Almost one in three teachers who said their school had no choir program today said their school used to have such a program.
- One in five parents said that there are *no* choir opportunities for their children in their communities.

¹ From the 2009 *Chorus Impact Study*, Chorus America. www.chorusamerica.org/about_choralsinging.cfm.