



May 18, 2010

Dear Grade/Middle School Music Teacher,

Last fall I became the artistic director of the Milwaukee Children's Choir. I have spent the year getting to know the other directors, the organization, its choirs and choir members. MCC has a great artistic team and 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. We hope you will send us any singer (or singers, so they can carpool!) you think would benefit from membership in one of our choirs. We want to work with your youngest elementary school children—the ones you hear singing in the classroom (and sometimes in the halls and while they wait for the school bus!). We want your middle schoolers—those who like being challenged musically and would benefit from another musical growth experience.

If you like what you read here, please fill in the attached referral sheet and send it to us right away. If you prefer, call me (cell: 262-707-5095) or send an email to me at cstorck@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org. Talk to your students and encourage them to contact us. Whatever you can do to send singers our way we would appreciate.

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 learning music and the thrill of performing it well. After year-long discussions, we are making several commitments to you and the singers you send our way:

Our commitments:

- **To engage choir members in challenging but age-appropriate learning.** This may be silly singing games with first graders, arrangements of folk songs with third graders, or challenging repertoire from the masters with eighth and ninth graders. Attached is an updated list of next year's choir levels and what can be expected at each level.
- **To provide our singers with performance experiences they can get nowhere else.** All of our singers in grades 1-12 perform. Our young Prelude singers will enjoy the excitement of performing with a hundred other children for family and friends. They also get to perform "with the big kids" throughout the year. Our Cantabile singers perform on stage with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (MSO) once a year at an education concert. Our Jubilate and other treble singers perform in

the pit with the Milwaukee Ballet at *The Nutcracker*. Next year's Jubilate will also perform with the MSO at its holiday concert and will share the stage with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra. Some of our singers will be also be on stage with the MSO at a spring 2011 Kinderkonzert. And we begin planning for a tour the summer of 2012. Our singers regularly tell us that the performance experiences they enjoy through MCC membership are events they will never forget.

- **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 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, 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. We are also beginning an early childhood music program for 4-5 year olds next fall, and calling it Songbirds. I enclose a flyer you could copy to hand out to families with younger siblings.

Having seen the positive momentum 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,



Carol Storck
Artistic Director

Attachments:

- Choir level descriptions
- Referral form
- MCC biography
- Choral Impact Study summary
- 2009-2010 accomplishments
- Posters and cards
- Songbirds flyer



Prelude Singers hard at “work” during rehearsal.



Jubilate in the Marcus center
After singing Stravinsky’s
Symphony of Psalms with MSO



Some of the 400+ children who spent the day
with MCC at *Roots & Wings 2010*

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 Structure — 2010-2011 Season

(5/15/2010)

Songbirds (Grades K4 and K5): Songbirds is MCC's early childhood music program. Music instruction at this level is non-performance based. Children participate in 30-minute weekly classes for twelve weeks per semester, where they are exposed to the fundamentals of music, which prepare them for music literacy. Emphasis is placed on singing, but children do not yet sing in choral formation. Children sit in a circle with the teacher, while parents observe from the back of the class, so they may reinforce the learning at home. Music and neurological researchers agree that singing to a child during early childhood is not only an excellent means to bond with the child, it is also a necessary method to stimulate the child's brain development. MCC's early childhood music curriculum is based on the Kodaly-inspired lesson plan format and First Steps in Music Curriculum of Dr. John M. Feierabend, an internationally recognized leader in the field of early childhood education. Several MCC artistic staff members have had the privilege to study with him. With this program, children sing authentic folk songs and enjoy participating in singing and reciting finger plays, action songs, pitch exploration activities, movement exploration activities, circle games, and steady beat activities. Teaching aides such as puppets, scarves, parachutes, and rhythm instruments add to the fun of learning music, which is taught in a child-appropriate, playful manner. These fun, educational activities help children with language development, small and large motor skills, and social skills. They also pave the way for the literacy-based music instruction, vocal development, and performance experiences, which will be introduced at MCC's Prelude Choir level.

Prelude Choir (Grades 1-3): The word "prelude" means an introductory composition that prepares one for the succeeding musical piece. It seems to perfectly reflect this choir level, which is a beginning choral experience where creative, child-centered, and age appropriate activities introduce young singers to vocal development and music reading. Repertoire for the Prelude Choir is based on the use of folksongs with emphasis on Kodály Methodology. Appropriate choral octavos are also used in preparation for performances. Unison singing is emphasized, but choir members also sing canons and partner songs. One hour classes are scheduled at three rehearsal sites around the city: Prelude North (Mequon United Methodist Church), Prelude East (Milwaukee Youth Arts Center), and Prelude West (Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church). Children attend the rehearsal site closest to them from September until the end of May. They also attend occasional combined rehearsals where singers from each of the individual Prelude rehearsal sites come together to sing as one larger choir. The Prelude Choir has four concerts per year; and Prelude singers are offered additional performance opportunities, which are optional.

Cantabile Choir (Grades 4-8): The word "cantabile" (pronounced "can-tah-bee-lay") refers to singing in a melodious and graceful style, full of expression. At this level choir activities focus on singers' vocal range, tone quality, music literacy skills, and performance skills. Repertoire consists of folk songs, art songs, multicultural music, songs in foreign languages, as well as works by major composers. Unison and two-part singing are emphasized throughout the year, and 3-part treble harmony is introduced. Ninety-minute weekly rehearsals are offered at 4 rehearsal sites around the city: Cantabile North (Mequon United Methodist Church), Cantabile West (Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church), Cantabile East (Milwaukee Youth Arts Center), and Cantabile Central (Milwaukee Youth Arts Center). In addition, students attend combined rehearsals when the entire Cantabile Choir meets. The Cantabile Choir performs in four concerts per year, plus Cantabile singers are given additional performance experiences, which are optional. The choir season runs from September until May.

Jubilate Choir (Grades 7-9): The word "jubilate" (pronounced "you-bee-lah-tay") means celebration and great joy. MCC's Jubilate, directed by MCC Artistic Director Carol Storck, showcases some of our most talented treble singers. Members of this choir level sing the most demanding MCC repertoire in 3- and 4-part treble harmony. All styles and genres are performed, as are master works with orchestra. Jubilate performs often, and sings at a

professional level with organizations such as the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Present Music and Milwaukee Ballet. Members continue to develop music reading, vocal technique, and theory skills. They rehearse once per week for two hours. Members of the Jubilate Choir will also have an opportunity to work with MCC's Vocal Coach, Jenny Gettel, as well as Studio Artists from the Florentine Opera. They are given solo and chamber choir performance opportunities throughout the year. Jubilate tours every three to five years. Tours are optional, and are not included in the tuition price. MCC has toured regionally, nationally, and internationally. Our next tour is scheduled for the summer of 2012.

Milwaukee Youth Chorale (Grades 10-12): The MYC, directed by Jason Clark, is an experienced SATB choir. Members learn and perform outstanding advanced high school and college-level repertoire of all styles and genres, including works by master composers, multicultural music, gospel, vocal jazz, etc. Singers at this level work to develop a wider vocal range and a more mature tone. Younger males whose voices have developed in a lower range will be admitted into MYC early. MYC rehearses once per week for 2 hours, and performs often. Members of MYC will also have an opportunity to work with MCC's Vocal Coach, Jenny Gettel, as well as Studio Artists from the Florentine Opera. They are given solo and chamber choir performance opportunities throughout the year. MYC tours every three to five years. Tours are optional, and are not included in the tuition price. MCC has toured regionally, nationally, and internationally. Our next tour is scheduled for the summer of 2012.



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

1

2

3

4

5

Milwaukee Children's Choir biography
May 15, 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, and beginning in the fall of 2010 it will offer a program for children grades 4K-5K. 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. In addition to its regular choirs, 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.

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.

MCC Successes 2009-2010

(as of May 12, 2010)



**Milwaukee
Children's Choir**

Building Noteworthy Character

In July 2009 MCC invested in its future and the future of Milwaukee's youth by hiring its first full-time artistic director. With this new hire we are able to build on MCC's firm foundation, with these resulting successes.

Artistic Director Carol Storck

Founder Emily Holt Crocker

Executive Director Deborah Patel

www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org

mcc@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org

www.facebook.com/milwaukeechildrenschoir

158 North Broadway, Milwaukee WI 53202

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

Continued excellence in education

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

Signs of choir growth potential following several 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
- ✓ Good turnout for spring auditions as we register singers for 2010-2011

Performance successes

- ✓ 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
- ✓ Journal Sentinel declares MCC "part of the magic" of Milwaukee Ballet's world premiere *Peter Pan* and singers enjoy the experience—at least one choir member says it's the best performance he's been in, ever!

Strengthened 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

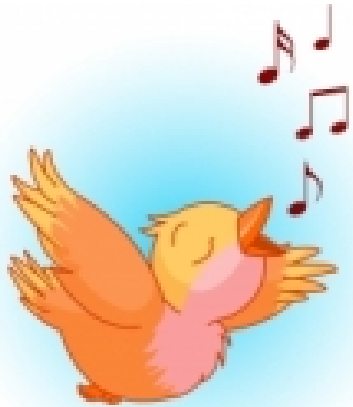
Why it matters: See reverse side for results of a recent national study measuring the impact of choral singing on children.



Milwaukee
Children's Choir
Building Noteworthy Character



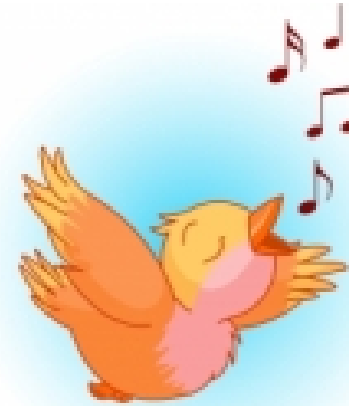
Milwaukee
Children's Choir
Building Noteworthy Character



Introducing **SONGBIRDS!**

“Songbirds” is MCC’s new Kodaly-inspired and non-performance based program for singers in Grades 4K - 5K. During twelve 30 minute classes, Songbirds sing authentic folk songs and enjoy singing games, complete with fun teaching toys. Parents observe so they may reinforce learning at home. Songbirds develop language, small and large motor skills, and social skills. They also prepare to enter MCC’s Prelude Choir level. Offered at Milwaukee Youth Arts Center (Tu. 5:15-5:45PM) and Mequon United Methodist Church (Th. 4:30-5:00PM.) Call 414-221-7040 or email membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org for details.

Milwaukee Children's Choir
Artistic Director Carol Storck
Founder Emily Holt Crocker
Executive Director Deborah Patel
www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org
mcc@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org
www.facebook.com/milwaukeechildrenschoir
158 North Broadway, Milwaukee WI 53202
(ph) 414-221-7040 (fax) 414-221-7041



Introducing **SONGBIRDS!**

“Songbirds” is MCC’s new Kodaly-inspired and non-performance based program for singers in Grades 4K - 5K. During twelve 30 minute classes, Songbirds sing authentic folk songs and enjoy singing games, complete with fun teaching toys. Parents observe so they may reinforce learning at home. Songbirds develop language, small and large motor skills, and social skills. They also prepare to enter MCC’s Prelude Choir level. Offered at Milwaukee Youth Arts Center (Tu. 5:15-5:45PM) and Mequon United Methodist Church (Th. 4:30-5:00PM.) Call 414-221-7040 or email membership@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org for details.

Milwaukee Children's Choir
Artistic Director Carol Storck
Founder Emily Holt Crocker
Executive Director Deborah Patel
www.milwaukeechildrenschoir.org
mcc@milwaukeechildrenschoir.org
www.facebook.com/milwaukeechildrenschoir
158 North Broadway, Milwaukee WI 53202
(ph) 414-221-7040 (fax) 414-221-7041