

The Treble Voice

The Official Newsletter of The Memphis Boychoir

Fall 2011

Boychoir and Chamber Choir Tour the Nation's Capital

On June 30th, seventeen elementary school aged boys and their families boarded two buses headed for Washington DC and the National Cathedral. The Washington DC Tour experience was a great inspiration to all who participated. The Memphis Boychoir and the Memphis Chamber Choir performed a number of programs in the DC area between June 30 and July 5.

The highlight and driving force behind the tour was the invitation to sing Choral Evensong at the National Cathedral on July 1, at 5:30 p.m.

The National Cathedral is located at one of the highest points in the DC area. Construction started on the Cathedral in 1907 and it took most of the 20th century to complete the building. It is influenced strongly by Gothic architecture and its strong presence is an inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to visit. Many important events have taken place at the National Cathedral including Martin Luther King's final Sunday sermon, the funeral of President Ronald Reagan and the memorial service for 9/11.



GOTHIC SPLENDOR *The Memphis Boychoir in The National Cathedral.*

For the past few months we have been immersed in the music that we performed in this special and sacred space.

The Tour also included performances at the Canadian Embassy, the Basilica of the National Shrine and the Singapore Embassy.

The Canadian Embassy performance was on Canada Day - July 1, 2011. The choirs performed "O Canada" for over 700 Canadians gathered at the embassy. The recital at the National Shrine, which is the largest Basilica in North America, was at the front of the upper church. There was an unbelievable resonance

that the choir experienced at the Basilica. The sound traveled through this immense space for about six seconds.

Dr. Ching-Hon Pui, a Memphis Boychoir Board member, arranged to have us perform at the Singapore Embassy for the Ambassador of Singapore. Ambassador Chan was very hospitable and gracious with her remarks before the performance. She loved the energy of the boys both during the recital and the reception.

These opportunities were thrilling for everyone involved. We had ninety people in our group including performers, family and friends.

Many Thanks to Our Generous Donors!

The Memphis Boychoir Inc., a chartered non-profit 501-c-3 corporation registered with the state of Tennessee, would like to thank the following donors for their generous contributions to our Annual Fund. This list includes contributions received June 30 - September 30, 2011.

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Dr. Ching-Hon Pui
Jim and Virginia Rainer
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Simpson
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Walker & Gregg Milnor



REQUIEM REHEARSALS *The group find their unison note (left); Iain Campbell and James Elliott (above) during a break at dress rehearsal.*

Requiem Eucharist Commemorates 10th Anniversary of 9/11

September 11, the day of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City, has been etched into our collective national consciousness as a day of infamy and mourning commonly referred to as 9/11.

To mark the 10th anniversary and to remember the victims of this event, The Memphis Boychoir performed a Requiem Eucharist with the Chancel Choir at Saint John's Episcopal Church. This was a great challenge for the boys considering that they had only four rehearsals to prepare.

Prior to the service a member of Saint John's and former member of the New York Police Department, Jim Shepherd, gave a personal and articulate account of his experience of being on duty on 9/11. He commented that this was not something that he talked about often, but that he knew it was important to share his experience as part of the anniversary. Jim's three boys Jonathan, Ethan and Liam have been in the Boychoir since January 2010.

The a capella music performed by the choirs and the solo cello music heightened the emotional impact of the day. The boys remained focused and professional throughout this important memorial service.

Fall Recital To Feature Choral and Organ Music of Jehan Alain

We are celebrating the choral and organ music of Jehan Alain at our Fall Recital on Friday October 21, 2011 at 7:30 pm. Alain (1911-1940) wrote a number of influential organ works in his brief career including the Trois Danses and Litanies, which will be featured on the recital.

Alain died at the age of 29 while serving France in WW II. His music has been a staple of the organ repertoire and we are thrilled to welcome Dr. James Higdon as our guest artist for the recital. Dr. Higdon is the Dane and Polly Bales Professor of Organ at the University of Kansas. He has performed and recorded the complete works of Jehan Alain and has also studied extensively with Alain's sister Marie-Claire Alain.

Dr. Higdon was my organ teacher at the University of Kansas from 2002 to 2006. I am very excited about welcoming him to Memphis for the first time to perform.

In addition to the organ works the Memphis Boychoir and the Memphis Chamber Choir will perform the three choral masses that Alain wrote in 1938, just two years before his death. Two of these works are accompanied by string quartet and flute. Alain's music is mature beyond his years and we are thrilled to have this opportunity to share this Fall Recital with you! There will be a reception following the recital in the Parish Hall. —GHW



SO, WHAT'S A LITTLE MUD ON THE KNEE WHEN IT'S ALL IN GOOD FUN?
During a well deserved rehearsal break, members of the Memphis Boychoir pose for an informal group photo before returning to their soccer endeavors.

Calendar of Events

Friday, October 21, 7:30 pm

Fall Recital – Music of Jehan Alain
The Memphis Boychoir and Memphis Chamber Choir; featuring Dr. James Higdon, Professor of Organ, The University of Kansas; Saint John's Episcopal Church, 3245 Central, Memphis

Sunday, November 20, 10:00 am

The Memphis Boychoir joins the MBCC Choir and Dr. Leo Davis for Sunday worship; Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, 70 N. Bellevue, Memphis; www.theblvd.org

Wednesday, November 30, Noon

Calvary and the Arts featuring The Memphis Boychoir and Chamber Choir; Calvary Episcopal Church, 102 North 2nd Street at Adams Avenue; www.calvarymemphis.org

Sunday, December 18, 4:00, 7:00 pm

24th Annual Service of Lessons and Carols; music for brass and organ plus congregational singing; Saint John's Episcopal Church, 3245 Central Ave. at Greer, Memphis; www.memphisboychoir.org



Great Stocking Stuffers!

It's not too early to prepare for the Christmas holidays. We'd love to see our Tees on your whole family. Call 323-8597 (pick up at St. John's, Greer at Central).

• Alumni Profiles •

Michael Elliott



TWO GENERATIONS *Memphis Boychoir alumnus Michael Elliott is pictured above with his son and current MBC member, James.*

I joined the Memphis Boychoir a year or two after its inception, under the direction of John Ayer. The choir was made up of mostly fifth- and sixth-graders—a dozen boys, at most. In the brief time I was a member, I learned how to sing: how to breathe, how to harmonize, how to start and stop with a hand gesture, how to move the pitch of my voice in correlation to the notes on the page.

While I do not sing professionally now (I own a landscaping business), the skills I learned in the boychoir are all skills that I use to this day—whether I'm singing in my church choir, caroling at Christmas time, or simply appreciating the music others make.

I was very excited and grateful when I found out that Dr. Ward is carrying on the tradition for the next generation of young Memphians, and proud that my seven-year-old son James could be a part of it.

NOTE: Michael and his wife Margaret, with their two sons James and Paul, live in Memphis. Michael and his brother Tim own Elliott Lawns, LLC.

MEMPHIS BOYCHOIR

Discover the sound of centuries.

The mission of The Memphis Boychoir is to provide the city of Memphis and surrounding areas a spiritual and musical experience featuring the unique aural qualities of unchanged treble boys voices and to provide boys with the opportunity to participate in a musical discipline which builds confidence, collegiality, and teamwork.

The Treble Voice, the official newsletter of The Memphis Boychoir, is published by The Memphis Boychoir, Inc., 3245 Central Ave., Memphis, TN 38111. To submit items, please contact Dr. Geoffrey Ward by phone or email at: 901-323-8597 x26 or ghward@stjohnsmemphis.org.

Highlights of the Washington DC Tour

The Washington DC Tour was a life-changing opportunity for the boys and adults in our program. Performing and interacting with institutions like the National Cathedral promotes a great sense of growth and development in the Memphis Boychoir. We are focused not only on the

continuing musical growth of the boys, but also the process of them developing into the next great leaders in the city of Memphis. We continue to search and recruit boys who love to sing as well as families that appreciate the life-long skill of music making that their children are exposed to.

The responsibility of singing at the National Cathedral is great in terms of the meaning and significance that it provides for the participants. When elementary school aged boys are able to articulate this it gives me great hope for the future of our program and for the city of Memphis. —GHW



MEMORABLE MOMENTS *Members of the Memphis Boychoir and the Memphis Chamber Choir wore many hats during their summer Tour of Washington DC. They served as cultural ambassadors, friendly neighbors and a well disciplined musical troupe at every turn of the journey and returned to the Mid-South with many special memories to be savored over a lifetime. Among them were performing at the Basilica of the National Shrine (left), singing at the Singapore Embassy (below left) and entertaining a large and enthusiastic crowd with a smashing rendition of “O Canada” on Canada Day at the Canadian Embassy! Hats off for a job well done!*



MEMPHIS BOYCHOIR DVD

Our promotional DVD includes photos, video and music from our Tour of Washington DC. To get your personal copy, please contact ghward@stjohnsmemphis.org. You can also view this DVD on our website www.memphisboychoir.org.



FALL 2011 PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

THE MEMPHIS BOYCHOIR & MEMPHIS CHAMBER CHOIR

FALL RECITAL

Friday, October 21 at 7:30 P.M.

GUEST ARTIST: Dr. James Higdon, Professor of Organ, University of Kansas

24TH ANNUAL SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 18 at 4:00 & 7:00 P.M.

Above: The choirs performed at Washington National Cathedral, Washington, D.C., July 1, 2011

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Discover the sound of centuries.

SAINT JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
CENTRAL AT GREER
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Special Insert