

Eugene Concert Choir / Eugene Vocal Arts 2018-2019

Newsletter • September 10 & 11, 2018

Dear Singers,

I want to welcome you to the start of a new season. There have been significant changes over the last several months, and I am approaching this season with an anticipation of a new beginning for me and for the organization as a whole.

What has changed? I am now what I have always ever wanted to be: Artistic Director and Conductor. I have shed the title of Executive Director and we have passed that mantle to Sherry Parmater, who joined our staff in May. So what does that mean for the future direction of the choirs? What will change?

What changes significantly for me is my mindset. My focus, my attention, my hopes and dreams and aspirations are freed up to more fully take an artistic direction. People ask me all the time – after 33 years of doing this job, aren't you tired? Looking toward retirement? No. With the gift of this focus on artistic direction, I feel a new beginning. There is so much left to do, so many things I hope to accomplish, so many ways I hope to further build the organization. I am setting my sights on the next ten years to truly create a legacy.

You may not see any dramatic change in the short term. It takes time to turn an ocean liner. Here are some small, incremental changes that will affect you:

1) Media presence – “Your participation in the choirs is your permission for ECC to use your image in photos and video in perpetuity.” That statement has previously been assumed, but is now spelled out in our Choir Handbook. As we build our stature and professionalism, our media presence will increase. Please read the full policy in our Handbook and talk to me if you have any issues with this policy.

2) Membership – The Eugene Concert Choir and Eugene Vocal Arts are ensembles that have a cohesive membership. We perform together for the full season – for classical, holiday, pops and kids concerts, and for our gala fundraiser. There are other choirs in the region in which you can drop in and out or participate for six weeks out of the year. If that is your preference, then that is the type of choir for you. But the ECC organization encompasses a full season membership. We support each other, rely on each other, are responsible to each other and to our audiences, and we grow together with the cohesiveness of shared experience. Our season calendar of concerts and events is presented to you in January or February for the following season. If your membership is important to you, you will plan vacations and family events such that they do not compromise your membership. Of course there are exceptions and extenuating circumstances. Please read the attendance policy in the Handbook and contact me directly with any issues of concern. The best way to contact me is through my office email: diane@eugeneconcertchoir.org.

3) Preparation – We all enjoy rehearsals more when there is a general preparation by all singers that allows us to move together as a choir. Having to stop and catch one section up to the others is uncomfortable for everyone involved. I want you to be resourceful in finding ways to keep up with the pace of rehearsals. But if you need assistance, please ask. You all passed the audition. There are varying levels of musicianship, range and tone quality. You are all in choir for a reason, and each of you adds your own strengths. A choir is not like a chain, which is only as strong as its weakest link. A choir is a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts.

We have some new additions to our staff and organization. Please welcome Sherry Parmater, our new Executive Director, and assist her in any way you can. Sherry moved from Kalispell, Montana to take this position with us and she has only had a few months to begin to explore the wonders of our beautiful Eugene-Springfield region and our resplendent state of Oregon.

We welcome a new ECC accompanist, Brad Schultz, and send our best wishes to Julia Brown at her new church position in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Also new to the staff is Lizz Wells, joining us as Marketing and Event Assistant, to fill the position vacated by Mindy Linder. In addition to marketing and event experience, Lizz brings with her a wealth of musical talent as well, and she will also cover the position of Music Education Director. We thank Bruce Haines for his past two years of inspiring kids through our ECCO program.

Tenor Ryan Dixon is going to assist me with some of the conducting and rehearsal preparation duties throughout the season. As I mentioned last season, we intend to create a Caroling Choir for special events, and Ryan will also direct that ensemble. More on how you can get involved later. Camilla Carter continues as our stellar accompanist for EVA, and Angela Egremont continues to be our foundation as General Manager and hold us all together. We are a strong and enthusiastic staff, and we all look forward to extraordinary performances to enhance our cultural lives in this community.

Yours,
Diane

Eugene Concert Choir, 1590 Willamette St., Ste. 400, Eugene, OR 97401
541-687-6865 • choir@EugeneConcertChoir.org • www.EugeneConcertChoir.org
Diane Retallack, Artistic & Executive Director • Joel Bradford, Development Director
Angela Egremont, General Manager

Continued from other side

ECC Staff Members

Diane Retallack, Artistic Director & Conductor of the ECC for 33 years, is the backbone of the organization, having kept us going through thick and thin for three-and-a-half decades. She founded the Eugene Vocal Arts shortly after taking the position with the Eugene Concert Choir and, in 2015, formed the Eugene Concert Orchestra. Over the years, the two choirs have performed magnificent masterworks, and all manner of programs reflecting cultural and social awareness, plus music from numerous and varied other genres.

Sherry Parmater, our Executive Director, joined us in May, relocating to Eugene from Kalispell, Montana. As an oboe player with extensive experience playing in various symphonic organizations, she also brings a wealth of fundraising and marketing credentials to the position with ECC. She served as Executive Director of the Wyoming Symphony and the Helena Symphony.

Angela Egremont, whom most of you already know (maybe more than you'd like!), has worked in the choir office as General Manager for just over 10 years. Born in England, she is burdened with a sometimes misguided sense of humour that choir members have learned to accept as an inherent disability. She also knows how to spell and type.

Lizz Wells, our newest staff member in the position of Marketing & Event Assistant and Music Education Director, brings a dash of youth to the staff roster.

Welcome to New Choir Members

We're delighted to welcome the following new members to our wonderful choir ensembles:

ECC: Camille Haakanson (S-2), Jana DiSanti (A-1), Sophie Migeon (A-1), Carl Knoch (T-1), Mike Bricker (B-1), Yevgeny Genin (B-1), Garrett Ledgerwood (B-2)
EVA: Sophie Migeon (S-2), Carl Knoch ((T-2), Garrett Ledgerwood (B-2)

Choir Communications

Many of the handouts you receive at the beginning of rehearsals are also on the website. Please make it a habit to check there before calling the office to ask when the next rehearsal is, or what we're wearing at a specific event, etc.

The website is www.EugeneConcertChoir.org. For choir-related information, scroll down to the bottom of the Home page and click on "For Choir Members" under the Musicians heading. If you don't find what you're looking for there, then call the office at 541-687-6865.

(Note: This being the first week of rehearsals, some information may take a day or two to be posted, so please check back a bit later.)

Highlights & Harmony Gala Benefit

The first performance for all of us will be at our gala benefit *Highlights & Harmony*, Friday, October 12 at 6:00 pm at Valley River Inn, Willamette Ballroom. We encourage you to buy tickets and fully experience all aspects of the gala. Invitations are available at choir rehearsals and at the choir office for you and for anyone else you want to contact.

If you don't intend to buy tickets for the event, you are still needed to perform. The performance part of the program will be from 7:00 to 8:15 pm. We realize that some of you have work conflicts that preclude being present for the afternoon rehearsal, but everyone should try their best to make special arrangements to be present for the rehearsal from 3:45 to approximately 4:45. For the professionalism of the program to work, we need to rehearse in the venue.

Next week, we will have a *Highlights & Harmony* gala benefit information sheet with more information about the event.

The Practice Corner

Your outside preparation in between rehearsals is always expected. Carve out a time in your personal schedule to concentrate on your music for choir rehearsals. Each week, Diane will feature selections of music to focus on in your outside practice. You are always welcome to go beyond that and prepare more.

For next week, we want to be thoroughly prepared on the music we will perform at the *Highlights & Harmony* Gala Benefit:

EVA: Also Sprach Zarathustra; The Peace of Wild Things

ECC: Seventy-Six Trombones; One Day More (ECC will also perform "Celebration" by Paul McCartney at the Gala. This music is rental and is on order. It is supposed to arrive this month, so we will need to focus concentration on it as soon as it arrives.)

Community News

If you would like to post personal information, such as a piano for sale, your need for a house sitter, kittens needing a new home, your role in a play, etc., please e-mail your notice to choir@EugeneConcertChoir.org by 10 a.m. Monday of the week the announcement will run.

Eugene Concert Choir, 1590 Willamette St., Ste. 400, Eugene, OR 97401
541-687-6865 • choir@EugeneConcertChoir.org • www.EugeneConcertChoir.org
Diane Retallack, Artistic & Executive Director • Joel Bradford, Development Director
Angela Egremont, General Manager