

Eugene Concert Choir / Eugene Vocal Arts 2018-2019

Newsletter • November 12 & 13, 2018

Dear Singers,

I feel a need to spread joy and kindness throughout the community for this holiday season. Perhaps the community shares that need as much as I do, because we had a rush at the Hult Box Office and sold 428 tickets to *Dickens of a Christmas* on Wild Card Day last week. Let's keep that momentum going. We have \$10-off coupons for the choir this week.

Much of the charm of this show will depend on the stage presence and personality of all of you performers. In order to get to the point of projecting personality, you all need to know your music up one side and down the other. We will be moving around the stage and interacting with each other. Looking quizzical or wandering in wrong directions does not add to the professionalism of the show. This is a different skill than we, as classical choir members, usually capitalize on. We can read music and perform complex, intricate musical passages with our experience and alertness. For *Dickens*, we need to completely *overlearn* our music to the kind of memorization in which you can perform automatically while thinking of and doing other things amid great distraction of lights, scenery, costuming and action.

You also need to project an enormous amount of energy when you are "on," so conserve when you are not. Be quiet and attentive for stage directions in between musical selections so we can move efficiently through rehearsals. There may be times when your presence is required but you are not called upon to do anything for extended periods of time. Come prepared to occupy yourself with your music study or with a book, puzzles, or other enjoyments. You are encouraged to talk to and make friends with others and help each other out through the course of this venture, but please be cognizant of when and where your silence is necessary to support the flow of rehearsal and performance.

Joyfully,
Diane

Props Coordinator Needed

There is a big volunteer role we need someone to fill for the *Dickens* show. This needs to be someone who is not a choir member. The Props Coordinator keeps track of all of the movable parts of the sets, such as bags of money, wall hangings, dinner plates, wassail glasses, and so on. That person would help gather props and would attend the props table during rehearsals and the performance at the Hult Center.

This is an essential backstage role. If any of you have any leads on someone who might like to be a part of the success of our *Dickens* production, please write that information in Diane's Note Pad.

Music Education Director Position

We are excited to announce that Bruce Haines, our previous Music Education Director, is sufficiently recovered from his vocal challenges to continue on in that position this season! Bruce is like a gentle giant Mr. Rogers, and his work with children these past two seasons has proved highly successful and very productive, with disciplined child performers looking up at him with respect and devotion, giving it their all.

So, with regard to the Music Ed Director job posting, and in the words of Emily Litella, *Never Mind!*

Costumers

A *HUGE* thank you goes out to Robin Philips, Kim Wollter and Mary MacDiarmid for pulling together costuming for members of both choirs, plus outside actors, to assist everyone who needs to be in Renaissance and/or Dickens attire for the show. They have spent an enormous amount of time and energy organizing, schlepping, and doing whatever it takes to get us costumed. Thank you!

Child Actors Found

Diane has cast the rest of the child actors for *Dickens*. We will welcome Charlie Gambie as Tiny Tim, and Cameron Christopher will play the roles of the Renaissance servant lad and the Dickens boy. Both boys are perfect for these roles! Thank you to Garrett Ledgerwood who got us in touch with Cameron, and to Lynn Frost who got us in touch with Charlie.

Now, on with the show!

ECC/EVA Ticket Sales Stats

Program Tickets Sold to Date:

EVA - Schubert *Mass in A-flat*: 206
ECC/EVA - A *Dickens of a Christmas*: 781
ECC - Faure *Requiem*: 128
EVA - The Peace of Wild Things: 42
ECC - American Style for Kids: 4
ECC - American Style: 132

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Diane Retallack, Artistic Director • Sherry Parmater, Executive Director
Lizz Wells, Marketing & Events Coordinator • Angela Egremont, General Manager

Pr-concert Festivities for *Dickens*

We will have pre-concert festivities in the lobby of the Hult Center starting at 1:30 pm, prior to our 2:30 show. The festivities will include the mellifluous sounds of the Oregon Tuba Ensemble and a carol sing-along, and we will be serving wassail (hot, spiced cider).

The Hult Center has had to change their policy regarding free food or drink offered to audiences, so I am sorry that we will not be able to provide free cookies this year. In fact, this will be the last year we will provide free wassail. None of the companies at the Hult will be permitted to hand out freebies anymore, and we got special dispensation to be able to phase out our cookies and wassail offerings to at least provide the wassail one last time. (It smells so good throughout the lobby.)

We have encouraged the Hult concessions to have small, festive Christmas cookies available at their concessions stands, and they are also planning special “Happy Hour” pricing on their drinks for our festivities.

The Hult Center has had a lot of pressure from the City to increase its concessions revenue, and it is a change they find necessary to make. Next week, we will put out a sign-up sheet for volunteers to serve wassail. This is better done by friends or relatives who are not choir members. So talk to friends or relatives that you think may enjoy this festivity.

ECC Parking Security at Emmaus

New-ish ECC members, or old-ish ones with shaky memories, may not notice that we have a security guard patrolling the parking lot during rehearsal each week at Emmaus Lutheran Church. This became necessary because, several years ago, when there was no patrol, people’s cars would be broken into while everyone was sweetly singing in the rehearsal hall.

Although we pay for a patrol person to be on site during Tuesday rehearsals, it would still be wise to leave out of sight anything tantalizing to a desperate felon, since the guard can’t be at both ends of the lot at the same time. Good news is that there has not been a single instance of vandalism or theft since we started the patrol. Your added diligence in keeping your “stuff” out of sight will help in maintaining that clean record.

—Angela, Choir Office

Choir Member Liaison Update

Hello Choir Members,

At our most recent board meeting, November 8, we reviewed the developing new Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Eugene Concert Choir organization. Choir members will be able to view this after our January board meeting, since we don’t meet in December. The board is most concerned about holding on to the gains we have made since hiring an Executive Director, which frees the Artistic Director to spend more time on planning and preparing new repertoire. Diane wants to continue to perform the major choral works and the new Strategic Plan factors that in. The Register Guard review for the EVA Schubert *Mass in A-flat* concert was extremely positive and Diane feels part of the success of that performance was due to her greater involvement in preparation now that she has help in the executive area.

Executive Director Sherry Parmater has designed a new Planned Giving brochure in our ongoing efforts to engage community members in making the Eugene Concert Choir part of their legacy. We are working on locations where they can be distributed and seen. Please let us know if you have any suggestions for distribution opportunities..

Sherry is also working on Giving Tuesday, a national online event set for November 27. The focus is on the ECCO program and the Kids’ Concert.

We will then be kicking off the year-end fundraising appeal two days after Giving Tuesday with direct mail to be followed by email blasts.

The Gala brought in \$51,000 overall. Gifts for the Soul cash donations alone brought in \$35,800 and of that, \$23,000 was donated by choir members and their families! Very impressive.

We are all blessed to be able to sing with the other talented and dedicated musicians that make up the Eugene Concert Choir & Orchestra and Eugene Vocal Arts! Thank you all for your continued support.

—Jennifer McConochie,
Choir Member Liaison to the Board

Get Your \$10-Off *Dickens* Coupons

Available at rehearsals and at the choir office, these discount coupons are for you and your friends and family. We wish we could provide each and every performer with comp tickets, in appreciation for all you do as choir members. But, not being in a financial position to do so, the \$10-off coupons are a token of our appreciation and encouragement to have the people who support you attend your performance.