

Dear Singers,

We have received many, many, many comments and accolades for brightening people's spirits over the holidays with our beautiful *Holidays Around the World* video. Here is my favorite comment:

"I absolutely LOVED it! I sang along when I knew the words, cried with some of the songs, laughed, clapped my hands, and just had many emotions as I enjoyed this video so much!"

Dot Bloomfield, commented on YouTube

Congratulations to all of you who participated, and warm greetings to everyone who enjoyed sharing the video with family and friends.

I am wishing you a happy new year in every imaginable way. As we kick off 2021, I wanted to fill you in on the plans for both choirs going forward.

Auditions – We are holding auditions for new members on Sunday, January 10. Please pass the word and notify any of your interested friends or colleagues to contact the Concert Choir office at 541-687-6865 or choir@EugeneConcertChoir.org.

Brahms *Requiem* – One of the things that has sustained me throughout the challenges and disappointments of the past year is my drive to bring us all together to sing the Brahms *Requiem*, which Brahms considered "A Human Requiem" as it speaks to all humanity, not just one particular religion. Both **Eugene Vocal Arts** and **Eugene Concert Choir** will perform the Brahms *Requiem* in February of 2022 as a part of our next concert season, but we are also invited to perform it in Carnegie Hall on June 20, 2022. This is a very special invitation that will be the culmination of the MidAmerica Productions concert season and will be dedicated to the memory of those we have lost to the coronavirus. I am urging every choir member to fill our artistic souls not once, but twice next season, and plan to make the trip to New York to perform this extraordinary masterwork. I will send out a separate newsletter about the Carnegie Hall trip. **We will begin rehearsing the Brahms *Requiem* on Tuesday nights starting January 19**, and I encourage all singers in both EVA and ECC to join these Zoom rehearsals and access the recordings of the rehearsals we will post on our website.

For Eugene Vocal Arts – We will prepare and record the *In Celebration of Women* concert to be released on YouTube for posterity. Having gone through the process of recording the *Holidays Around the World* concert video, I am now far more experienced and confident about what an extraordinary video we can create. Here is the schedule:

Monday evening remote rehearsals begin January 18, 7:30 – 9:30 pm

Basic Track recordings with selected singers February 26 – 28 at Hult Silva Hall

All singers record layered voices to basic track April 16 – 18 at Hult Silva Hall

Live performance Sunday, June 13 at 2:30 pm at Hult Silva, rehearsals Saturday, June 12

Summary explanation –

Rehearsals: We are launching an adventure of rehearsals with Jacktrip Virtual Studio to sing together, simultaneously, from our remote locations. Much more info to come.

Basic Track: I will choose singers to lay down the basic one-voice-to-a-part recordings in Silva Concert Hall in the same safe, extreme socially-distanced manner we did so successfully for the holiday video. This is a lot of repertoire, and I will assign certain voices to sing lead on selected songs and schedule in recording sessions throughout the February weekend.

All singers: Everyone will add their voices to the basic track in recording sessions at Silva Hall, again with extreme social distancing, no more than 9 singers at a time spread 30 feet apart from each other, from stage to back of concert hall. Recording sessions will be scheduled throughout the April weekend.

Live performance: For the *In Celebration of Women* concert, we can present a live performance with very few participants onstage, if that is all that is practical. Narrator Lexy Wellman will guide us all through a fascinating account of women composers throughout history illuminated by projected images, and actress Jane VanBoskirk will perform vignettes from her one-woman shows of Eleanor Roosevelt and suffragist Abigail Scott Duniway. The recordings of the choir will be put together in video format to be projected onstage for engaging visuals for the performance, as well as later release on YouTube. Depending on the state of things in June, we may also feature some live music with one voice on a part, or more.

Troy and I will be in touch with all Eugene Vocal Arts singers to focus in on the project for this season. We received a Hult Endowment grant award to do this concert project.

Eugene Vocal Arts also has repertoire for the *Beatles Forever* concert. Plans for that project are still developing.

For Eugene Concert Choir – We will work on the Brahms *Requiem* through Zoom rehearsals on Tuesdays starting January 19, and also prepare the Beatles repertoire for a concert yet to be determined in late spring or summer, depending on how the health of the nation develops. We concentrated on ECC's holiday concert video in the fall, and now it is EVA's turn to bring their preparation to fruition with a concert video this spring. I am holding out for ECC's Beatles concert to be a live performance, and I am exploring outdoor venues for the Beatles concert, as well as the Hult Center. We will be prepared to have a joyous performance where and when it is safe to do so. And then we will double down on Brahms next season.

Moving our Office Suite

We have a lot of new ventures to tackle in 2021. We are also doing a major move into the new Midtown Arts Center on 16th and Pearl throughout the month of January. And for the first time in 20 years or so, I will have a window!

Challenges to Positives from 2020

In addition to all of the challenges, the gut-wrenching losses, and the crazy-making annoyances and disappointments of 2020, there were also positive outcomes that will continue to serve us for the future. I have learned so much throughout the holiday video recording process that I will be a better conductor and production director for a more global reach for the choirs through internet presentation. We are establishing a YouTube presence and are even building subscribers to our YouTube channel. The Hult Center has acquired five booth-controlled video cameras to make livestream and video production possible, and they have installed large LED video screens that will enhance our programs substantially, especially the *In Celebration of Women* project. I think we all have a better appreciation for each other and for the value of live performance experience, while at the same time reaching those who have always been inaccessible and opening them up to virtual experiences.

Welcome 2021. We look forward to your promise.

Diane