

The Ottawa Children's Choir is devoted to artistic excellence, community connection and, above all, the joy of singing.

## Cheers to another great year!



Artwork by Kaitlin Janes  
Concert Choir

This InChoir issue is dedicated to the memory of Dennis Orchard,  
a long-time supporter of the Ottawa Children's Choir and past editor of InChoir.

# Au champ d'honneur:

## *An Important Addition to Canadian Choral Repertoire*

By Jackie Hawley

Artistic Director: Ottawa Children's Choir

Music Director: Chamber Choir



***Au champ d'honneur, les coquelicots  
sont parsemés de lot en lot***

These words are not as instantly recognizable  
to most of us as:

***In Flanders Fields the poppies blow  
beneath the crosses row on row***

Children across Canada read, recite, study, and sing John McCrae's famous poem every Remembrance Day. This stirring poem is part of our Canadian heritage. For years, the Ottawa Children's Choir has sung Canadian composer Alexander Tilley's English version of this poem at the National War Memorial on November 11. The time had come for us to sing it in French.

As far as I or any of my colleagues knew, there was not a French version of this piece in existence. It is part of the mandate of the Ottawa Children's Choir to commission new Canadian choral works. How fitting for the OCC to commission a French version of John McCrae's poem!

Commissioning a piece of music requires a number of steps, from the initial idea to the actual premier of the piece. Funding must be ensured before any steps can be taken. OCC was very fortunate that a generous benefactor offered the commission as a gift to the choir. This person, who wishes to remain anonymous, has great admiration for the OCC and has been a supporter for many years. This benefactor understands the importance of educational outreach and was glad to commission a piece that would be a valuable addition to the repertoire of choirs all across the country. The OCC is sincerely grateful for this gift!

The text of a new piece is critical. In this case, the text was already chosen before the composer was engaged. I believed that a French version of *In Flanders Fields* was necessary for our choir and for our school choirs. Military historian Major Jean Pariseau CM CD wrote the official translation for the Government of Canada. Permission to use the text had to be secured before the composer could set the text.

Once the text was chosen and the funding was in place, it was time to move ahead. Laura Hawley was the composer chosen to set this text. I had actually asked Laura over a year ago if she would consider composing a French *In Flanders Fields*. I knew, from her past compositions, that Laura would be able to create a piece that would combine artistry and accessibility in a way that would suit the needs of student choirs at the same time as reach the hearts of those listening to these significant words on Remembrance Day. Laura agreed to the criteria and timeline and began serious work on the piece. Here are her remarks:

---

*"I spent many weeks thinking about the text, saying it to myself in my head, and pondering a few different ideas I had. Most of my compositions have been driven primarily by harmony and voice-leading, so it was a challenge for me to create something that was mostly in unison and would be melodically conceived. It was important to me to create a melody that would be easily accessible, yet also interesting – something a little surprising yet satisfying that would also capture the sentiments of the text as I feel them.*

*"I decided to start the piece off with a melody in dorian mode, which is almost exactly like a natural minor scale. The only difference is the sixth note of the scale, lah, which is raised. This way, I thought I could use a scale that would be easy and familiar to sing, yet would also offer something fresh and unique. I chose d minor (and d dorian), which I thought would capture the right colour and mood, while also offering a singable range that would showcase children's voices of all levels well.*

*"As a pianist, it was also important to me to come up with something special just for the piano part. I often find it satisfying when an accompaniment's voice offers something unique to the sonic landscape. It took me a few tries before I came up with an accompaniment that satisfied all my goals – one that would be easy enough for perhaps a grade 8 piano student to learn to accompany a school choir, yet that would be musically interesting, varied, and supportive of the singing."*

Once the piece was ready, scores were copied for the Chamber Choir and the piece was learned. It was a luxury not afforded to many choirs, for us to have the composer with us as we learned the piece. This gave deep insight to choristers as to the composer's intention and also connected the singers to the music in a special way since there was already a strong bond between Chamber choristers and their accompanist (Laura). A few minor edits were made to the piece to facilitate phrasing and dynamic effectiveness and then *Au champ d'honneur* was rehearsed a few more times until it was acceptable to record.

Any piece sung in the Senate or for the Remembrance Day Ceremony must be approved by the Ministry of Veteran's Affairs and the Royal Canadian Legion. Although both organizations were thrilled with the idea of French version of *In Flanders Fields*, they still needed to hear the piece to approve it for performance at a National level. Chamber Choir worked intensely and efficiently to create a recording that we were proud to send. The piece was enthusiastically accepted and approved and was programmed to be sung at the Senate ceremony for the opening of Veterans' Week and for the National Remembrance Day Ceremony at the Canadian War Memorial on November 11, 2010.

Pieces sung at the ceremony must be accompanied by the Central Band of the Canadian Armed Forces. In less than a month, *Au champ d'honneur* needed to be arranged for the band. Laura had experience with arranging one of her previous choral piece for orchestra and was willing to do this. However, Captain Peter Archibald, the director of the band, was able to fit this into his schedule and it was decided that we would defer to his extensive expertise. We are indebted to Captain Archibald for his time and talent.

*Au champ d'honneur* was premiered in the Senate for the opening of Veterans' week on November 5, 2010. The following week on November 11, the piece was heard across Canada, sung by the Chamber and Concert Choirs as wreathes were laid to remember our Canadian soldiers. This was truly an honour for the Ottawa Children's Choir and composer Laura Hawley. (CBC Radio also broadcast the Chamber Choir recording the morning of November 11.)

Teachers who had participated in our Educational Outreach Program were aware that *Au champ d'honneur* was in the making. Needless to say, they were eager to teach this piece in their schools. The Chamber Choir demonstrated the piece for the teachers in October 2010 while the piece was still in its early stages. In October 2011 *Au champ d'honneur* will be featured at the EOP. Teachers and choir directors across Canada will be able to purchase Laura's piece in the near future, as it is soon to be published by the Rhythmic Trident Publishing Company of Vancouver.

The Ottawa Children's Choir has proudly commissioned many excellent Canadian choral pieces over its 53 years. The OCC should be especially proud of *Au champ d'honneur* by Laura Hawley. This poignant and touching piece is an important addition to Canadian choral repertoire and thanks to our benefactor, Laura and the OCC, students across our country can sing – from their hearts, in either official language – the historic words of John McCrae.

---

# The Joy of Singing

## *It Is for All to Embrace*

by Allison Prowse

Associate Artistic Director: Ottawa Children's Choir

Music Director: Concert and Viva Choirs



How many of you sing along with your car sound system, hum along as you do daily activities, or perhaps belt it out in the shower? Maybe you sing melodies out loud in your sleep, as one member of my family does on occasion... and no, it's not me 😊 Music surrounds us, supports us, encourages and engages our very being. And when music is described as "the joy of singing," it silently and graciously demands that our authentic self be present. It can only come from the very core of who we are. No one has your voice, your expression... and everyone does indeed have a voice! The joy of singing in choral ensemble is a gift that is for all who wish to engage with others in rehearsal and performance... in a wonderful place in life!

In the OCC, the choristers are indeed privileged to experience singing within a supportive educational context. The history of this over 50-year-old set of choirs has been enhanced by educators who have possessed, and who continue to possess, a passion for vocal music and the relevance of an equally balanced education. Music, and choral music in particular, is essential to intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth. Our hope is that a resonant understanding about The Arts will grow and thrive in the most positive of ways with our choristers and their families. Our children, indeed our future society, can only benefit from balanced life experiences that value the passion of expressing one's authentic self for the greater good. In our case, that expression is within our very own voices.

The Ontario Curriculum documents place high value on The Arts as they recognize the added benefits of a well-balanced student to school life, and to being future contributing community members. While what the OCC does is not dictated by The Arts document, both directors have worked with it in the past as teachers in the board system. The depth and breadth of the graded expectations for your child to experience and own as part of their daily school life is at a high level. Our scope in the OCC is particular to vocal education, and our programme is well planned and motivated by excellence in supporting the choristers' passion in a joy-filled, informed and well-educated process. The benefits of singing in a choir are well documented and receiving more attention. The value of making the choice to be committed; the value of hard work and supporting the other in musical community building; the development of problem-solving and critical thinking skills; planning, producing and assessing skills... all are but the tip of the iceberg that this experience of choral music can provide.

As for me and my soapbox – all of this is so very true and relevant when I step before, and into the middle, of your children... before YOU, the children. The unquestionable joy of singing is powerful! The resonance of that profound message of joy and energy and positive self-worth... a giving of your craft, of your authentic self to everyone around you... is so valuable! It is a vulnerable and yet life-affirming place to be, and as choristers, your ownership of your experience and the sharing of it with those around you is a life skill and value that will never leave your heart. Share who you are with your voice... give it away. Invite your family and friends to enter in to your passion, your joy, your authentic self! It's a great place to be. The "joy of singing" is for ALL to embrace, to enjoy, to experience!

So whether it is as an engaged listener, a hummer, or a singer of any sort, enter into this precious place of joy with your children. It is worth the experience, and worthy of our support and encouragement, for it is a vibrant and true place in our world. Just sing!

---

# President's Message

by Saye Clement  
President, Board of Directors

As the choir season draws to a close, I am struck by the appropriateness of the title of our spring concert: **The Voices of Our Song**. At first glance, a casual observer might make an error and assume that “The Voices” refers only to the choristers, and “Our Song” is the music that they make together. It is important to acknowledge and thank all of the “voices” of the organization: the choristers, Mrs. Hawley and Mrs. Prowse, Mrs. Campbell, the parents and families, the Board of Directors, supporters from the community, and all of the volunteers who ensure that the Ottawa Children’s Choir continues to thrive.

“Our Song” implies that we make the music ours through rehearsal and preparation, and then provide the best gift of all – sharing it with everyone that we can! We have so many opportunities to touch others with “our song,” be it during the ceremonies at the Cenotaph for Remembrance Day and Battle of the Atlantic, during our concerts, during school visits and any of the numerous other performances for the year.

Remember the values that we uphold as members of the Ottawa Children’s Choir: Artistic Excellence, Community Connection and the Joy of Singing! “The Voices of Our Song” captures all of those values so well. I’m sure that each and every one of you has a very special memory of a performance that touched you this year. Treasure those memories – we should never forget that we are truly blessed to be able to share “our song” with so many.

As with any organization, it seems that change is upon us again. Earlier this year, we were saddened to lose a devoted Board Member, Mr. Dennis Orchard. His wisdom and experience will be sorely missed. The *InChoir* was one of the projects to which he dedicated himself each year, and he would be very happy to see this issue. We have had the pleasure of Mrs. Valarie Campbell serving as our General Manager for this season. Family commitments (a posting to England!) necessitate her taking a leave of absence for the next year. Our General Manager for the upcoming season will be Mrs. Anna Tessier and we are very much looking forward to working with her!

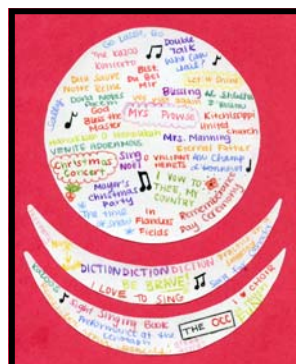
Once again, thank you to all for any role (large or small) that they played this year in making the season a success. Have a wonderful summer and I hope to see many of you in the fall!

---

## Thanks to our Cover Artist!



Kaitlin Janes  
Concert Choir



---

# Thank-You and Farewell (for now!)

by Valarie Campbell (General Manager, OCC)



In September 2010 I was warmly welcomed to the Ottawa Children's Choir as General Manager. It is with mixed feelings that I head off to England this summer with my family as my husband pursues a Master's Degree. We as a family have long hoped for this "adventure" and opportunity, but I am sad to leave you so soon.

What a wonderful organization I have found the Ottawa Children's Choir to be, and I feel privileged to have been a part of it for the past year. From my very first moments with Saye Clement (President, Board of Directors), Allison Prowse and Jackie Hawley, I have felt welcomed, valued and surrounded by helpful support. Together with all of YOU we seek to continue to provide quality musical training and opportunity for children.

All of my life, I've enjoyed singing as an expression of my own joy, sadness and hope. It has been such a joy for me to listen to and watch the children in our choirs over this choral year as they have expressed and shared through beautiful music!

Watching Mrs Prowse and Mrs Hawley direct has also been exciting for me and you already know how special they are! They are in a class all their own. Their amazing talent, constant enthusiasm, vision and advocacy for the OCC keep you at the top of your field.

I have learned so much here this year in the office and am grateful too for our past Treasurer Martin Andison's patient teaching and expertise in running the financial side of things. We are very blessed here to have so many talented volunteers who give freely and cheerfully of their time and talents for our organization. From the day-to-day carrying out of choir planning that Mrs Dugan and Mrs Manning do; to the parents and grandparents who help move risers, help with fundraising, and spend numerous hours running choristers to and from rehearsals and performances – thank-you! To our Tireless President, Saye, and our board of directors with their unique skills and energy – thank-you!

Most of all, **thank-you to you children** who raise your voices in songs that touch many a heart all over our great country and remind us each week as we hear you that there are still many beautiful things in our world. You may be surprised, as long after your time with the Ottawa Children's Choir is over and the years become decades, that these songs come to your mind, bringing with them a tune and a smile to lighten your spirit and carry you through your day.

**THANK-YOU ALL** for giving me the wonderful opportunity of working alongside you this year and for the friendships and experiences that it has brought to bless me. I look forward to seeing you all when we are back in Ottawa again!

# A Life-Long Love of Singing

Choir alumnus David Wray talks to the Concert Choir at Kitchissippi Church.

OTTAWA BOARD OF EDUCATION CENTRAL CHOIR 1971-72



*Our first album. That's me in the front row wearing our distinctive red vests.*

I am a very proud alumnus of the Central Choir [Ottawa Children's Choir] from 40 years ago, when it was under the direction of Arnold Earl. The choir helped develop my love of singing, leading to my joining the Senior Choir [what would become the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir] under Barbara Clark. Later I joined the Ontario Youth Choir, the Christ Church Cathedral Choir and, on more than a few occasions, have sung with our own Kitchissippi United Church choir.

I can still remember my audition with the Central Choir – a notice was placed at Connaught Public School stating that Arnold Earl would be visiting. He came to our classroom and, while we stood beside our desks singing "O Canada" over and over again, he walked up and down the rows listening to our voices.

I knew that, if I was selected, it would be a wonderful honour and I would have to devote 100% of my efforts to the choir. I knew that I would have to mark my calendar to attend the weekly practices and scheduled concerts. And I knew that this meant that I would miss out on some things that I might rather have done. But that was the price to be paid for having said "yes" – that for some other things I would have to say "no".

So, we sang "In Flanders Fields" at the Annual Remembrance Day, and at the National Arts Centre with its world-famous orchestra. And we sang here, in this glorious sanctuary, with light streaming through the stained glass windows, surrounded by our friends and families.

And so, after you sing the Benediction, I invite you to look out to the congregation, to the friends and family who are here today, and feel the love all around you. Because, just as you have said "yes" to your choir, they have said "yes" to YOU!

MAY YOU pursue a simple, disciplined, focused life in which you pursue the few things God has for YOU.



*David Wray speaking to the Ottawa Children's Concert Choir—Kitchissippi United Church  
February 27, 2011*

---

# Get to Know Our Amazing Accompanists!

## Top 10 InChoir Questions for Sally and Laura

### How long have you been accompanying the Ottawa Children's Choir?

**SALLY:** I've been with the choir since the fall of 2004. I played for Chamber Choir for 2004-05, then Chamber & Concert for 2005-06, then all three for the following 2 years. Since the fall of 2007, I've played with Concert & Viva. It's perfect – a five-minute walk from my house.

**LAURA:** I've been playing for OCC since September 2008.



**Sally Robinson  
& her dog**

### At what age did you begin music lessons and how long did you study?

**SALLY:** I started piano at age six and at clarinet at age nine. I dabbled with guitar a little as well. I continued with piano and clarinet all through school and into university, as I did a Bachelor of Music. (I got to travel to Europe with the Peace Gardens Band and Choir the summer I turned 16.)

**LAURA:** I have always had music in my life right from day one, although I was five years old when I started learning piano at lessons outside my home. I also studied violin, which I began in grade 2, and in elementary school, I learned to play the flute. I learned how to play the guitar when I was in high school. Piano eventually became my main focus and I went to university to study piano performance, and then after completing that degree, I did a Master's degree in music theory. I wrote my thesis about Ella Fitzgerald and developed my own methodology for analyzing improvised jazz. The study of music never really ends though, and I am still learning all the time. I have never felt as though I had stopped studying and I don't expect I ever will!

### Do you play any instruments other than piano?

**SALLY:** I play clarinet, a bit of keyboard accordion, some very basic guitar, and I sing.

**LAURA:** Sure do! (see above).

### Have you ever sung in a choir and if you did, did you like it?

**SALLY:** I sang in the choir in university and LOVED it. I would love to sing in a choir again someday.

**LAURA:** I have sung in choirs my whole life and have always loved it. I really enjoy making music with other people, whether it be in a choir, in an orchestra, or in a chamber music ensemble. Now that I am working as a full-time musician, I no longer have room in my schedule to sing in a choir, and I really miss it.



**Laura Hawley**

### What other musical things do you do, besides playing for the Children's Choir?

**SALLY:** I teach piano, accompany the Ottawa Regional Youth Choir, write songs and do house concerts sometimes, and play dinner music with my jazz trio.

**LAURA:** I accompany the Cantiamo Girls Choir and Cantiamo Training Choir and I have a private music studio in my home where I teach classical piano, theory, history, and harmony. I am also the Director of Music at St. John's Anglican Church in Kanata where I am in charge of everything musical, including an adult choir which I direct.

### Do you have a pet?

**SALLY:** I'm the proud owner of a dog and two cats. The dog is black and white; one cat is black and the other is white (like the piano keys.)

**LAURA:** I have a Devon Rex cat named Walle. He's the best. I love animals and if I hadn't decided to go to university for music, I would have become a veterinarian.



**Laura's cat, Walle**

### What sports or physical activities do you like?

**SALLY:** I like swimming, biking and hiking, and of course walking my dog.

**LAURA:** When I was in high school I used to be on a baseball team, which was really fun. Being on a team is great. I'm not on any sports teams now but I exercise regularly to stay healthy and to have the energy to keep up with life! I also enjoy outdoor things like hiking, cross-country skiing, canoeing, swimming, biking, fishing, and spring and fall gardening (when there are no mosquitos!).

### What is your favourite kind of music?

**SALLY:** It's hard to pick a favourite – anything that is well done. I love jazz. I also love well-written songs with good harmonies and good grooves.

**LAURA:** There are not too many kinds of music I dislike. I think classical music offers me something in terms of depth, variety and intensity of experience that far surpasses what I experience in any other genre, so perhaps that makes it my favourite. I also am very interested in jazz. Sometimes I tune in to hit radio stations to see what's happening in the world, but I get agitated pretty quickly with that kind of style as it seems like all the songs are actually the same song with slightly different words and the messages are always the same. I have to admit though – sometimes I like to have some junky pop music around for going to the gym. There are also plenty of brilliant artists out there working in the pop genre that are doing great, important, interesting musical things.

### If you have an iPod, what is on your playlist at the moment?

**SALLY:** I don't use my iPod, but I recently bought a CD by Eden Brent who sings blues and plays Louisiana-style piano. I'm planning on learning a few of her tunes. Also, I recently discovered a jazz singer called Melody Gardot – my, that woman can sing, with soul!

**LAURA:** The only playlist I have on my iPod is my "work-out playlist." Other than that, I've got it full of complete albums. Many artists put albums together as a complete concept and spend lots of time working on how to put it all together in a meaningful way, so I often can't bring myself to pull single tracks out of an album and take them out of context.

My iPod is maxed out with albums, so there are many. They include the Cambridge Singers, Rajaton, Ella Fitzgerald, Bill Evans, Louie Lortie's recording of some of the Beethoven Sonatas, Glenn Gould playing the Goldberg Variations, Yo Yo Ma playing Bach's cello suites, Meesha Bruggergossman, Imogen Heap, Bjork, Ani Difranco, Ben Folds, Feist, Hawksley Workman, Zero 7, Lizz Wright, Paul Simon, Gordon Lightfoot, Coldplay, Bob Marley... the list goes on...

I don't have a lot of classical music on my iPod because I find if I listen to classical music while doing something like driving my car, it's dangerous because my brain gets pulled too much into the music instead of on driving and I end up doing things like using red lights as if they were stop signs... (!)

### What is your favourite thing about living in Ottawa?

**SALLY:** Its size. It's not too big and it's not too small. I get lots of work and have a great network of friends, but it's not so small that it's claustrophobic.

**LAURA:** My favourite thing about being in Ottawa is being near family and friends.

---

# Top Ten “Scientific” Reasons Children Should Join the OCC

by Wanda Manning and Angie Dugan (The Dynamic Duo)  
OCC Choir Managers

10. OCC children have clearly demonstrated that it is possible for the 9- to 15-year-old age group to exhibit perfect posture.
9. Repeated experiments with OCC children show that it is possible for children (boys and girls) to pull hair out of their face.
8. Observations show that children in the OCC have the ability to enunciate more clearly than others at all grade levels.
7. It has been proven that OCC children can sit still longer than the average child.
6. It has been shown that, through their memory work, OCC members are capable of retaining more information than children not in the OCC setting.
5. OCC children routinely demonstrate that children can tuck in their shirts.
4. OCC researchers have collected numerous examples of choristers spontaneously using: *Please, Thank You* and *Excuse Me* in front of both peers and adults.
3. Seemingly normal children placed in an OCC setting are able to exhibit temporary awareness of their surroundings.
2. OCC choristers demonstrate, on a weekly basis, the skill of following instructions.
1. OCC singers have the ability to elicit goosebumps from both friends and strangers, simply by opening their mouths!

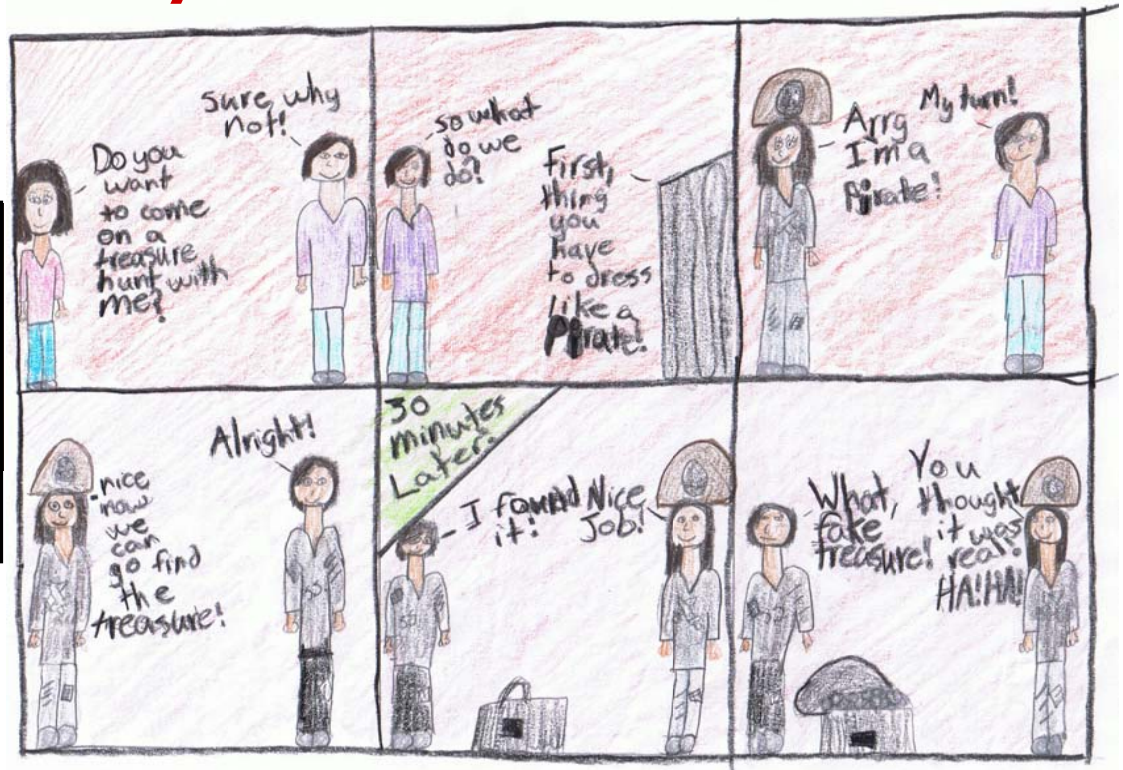
*Leading Choir Researchers: Wanda and Angie, whose studies have been reviewed and published in past issues of **InChoir**.*



# Not only can our choristers sing, they can draw too!



Comic by Rawan Ismail  
Concert Choir



Artwork from Isabelle Flack  
Concert Choir

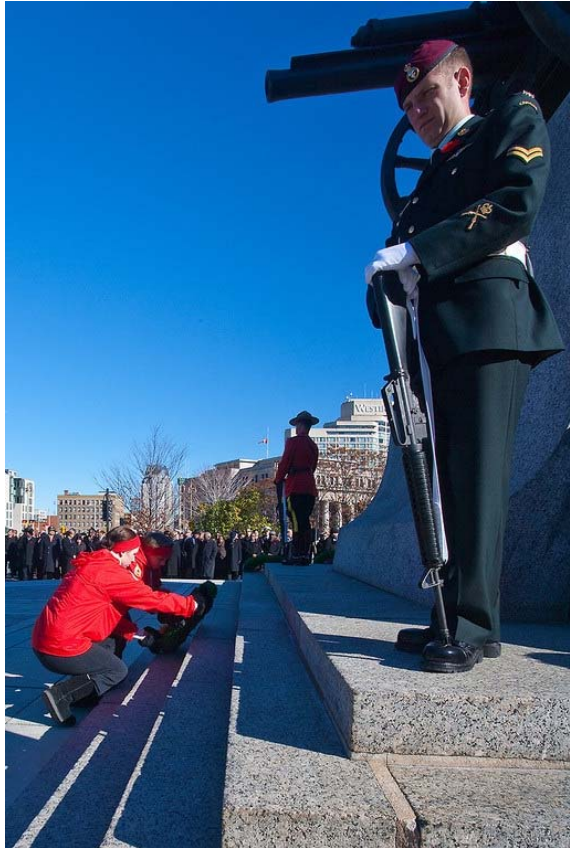




Photos: Richard Lawrence Photography



Photos: Bruce Gordon



Photos: Bruce Gordon



---

# I Love Being in Choir

by Alexa Chick, Chamber Choir



When I was four years old, I started singing in my church's choir. I didn't even know what the lyrics were. I could read, but not at that level. I didn't know what I was singing. But now that I can read, I not only sing the lyrics, I feel them. Music is poetry. The words make the song. The way the Ottawa Children's Choir sings these songs, is what makes us different from the others.

When I joined the Ottawa Children's Choir, I didn't know a thing about head tone, or good posture, but somehow, I learned it in a short amount of time. I have been so lucky to be in the OCC. The conductors of the three choirs, Jackie Hawley and Allison Prowse, are so talented. Every year they seem to manage to get a group of kids with either some background, or no background in music, to sing with a high level of skill. But "conductor" is an understatement when it comes to these two remarkable women. They are more than that. They are Educators, Leaders, and Role Models. People you can look up to.

I love being in choir. Especially the Chamber Choir. It has given me the opportunity to explore new music and genres, to meet some amazing people, and to make new friends that I will luckily be going to high school with. They are people I will keep close to me. A lot of my peers say that they are on a competitive soccer or hockey team. But I get to say, "I am in the Ottawa Children's Choir."

---

# A Gift that Should be Shared

by Lexa Michaelides, Chamber Choir



When I was 7 years old, I told my parents I didn't want to join school choir because I didn't want to sing what someone else told me to sing. I said I just wanted to sing whatever popped into my head. Seven years later, I've changed my mind completely. Choir isn't about singing what someone else tells you to sing, it's just about singing.

Choir is about squeezing onstage with 100 other choristers, desperately "fanning" so that we all fit and no one falls off. It's about bursting into song in Geography class despite the strange looks from your classmates and teacher. It's about walking back to school from the cenotaph or the Parliament buildings in your choir uniform, because you take pride in what you do and you're not ashamed to show it.

Yes, choir is about singing, but it's also about so many other things, things that really can't be put into words. It's just a feeling that you get when a song brings tears to your eyes, or when you stay up all night listening to a song that you've completely fallen in love with.

We OCC choristers have something special, and like all special things, it should be shared with others. So sing loud and proud, but make sure you sing "purdy" as well!

# How To Know If Your Friend Is a Chamber Chorister

by Renée Olo, Chamber Choir

They're all around us, there's no escaping them. Anyone, even your closest friend could be one. What am I talking about?

I am of course, talking about the dreaded Chamber chorister. The perpetrator of all things classical and gregarious. They pose a threat to the dominating 'Top 40' culture of today. Horrific, I know. That's why I've compiled this handy-dandy list of things you would normally observe in one.



- They bug you about your posture.
- They're always carrying a pencil around with them.
- They know ALL the words to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony finale. In GERMAN! Then they proceed to sing it in public.
- You will never see them wearing a red jacket.
- They will know all the words to 'The Mysterious Ticking Noise'.
- They will celebrate Beethoven's birthday. Yes, like Schroeder from Peanuts.
- Wearing paper crowns in public won't ever humiliate them.
- They will confuse you by singing 'Ain't it Great to be a Rat'.
- They can actually recite all of 'In Flanders Fields'. In French, if need be.
- They disappear off the face of the earth every single Wednesday.

If you think your friend is a Chamber chorister, I'd advise you to steer clear unless you really like 'Al Slosha'. Thanks!



---

# The Mayor's Christmas Party

by Defnenur Ureten, Concert Choir

The Mayor's Christmas party was a blast and a great experience. When I first walked in, I was enchanted by all the decorations and events going on. There were candy canes and Christmas trees made of balloons, clowns, Beaver Tails, dressed-up people walking on stilts and many more. When we were warming up, we got to meet the Mayor of Ottawa which was pretty cool and exciting.

As we went on the stage, first the Viva Choir sang their songs and everyone cheered. While the Concert Choir was performing our songs, I saw one of my friends from school sitting in the audience. For our last piece of music, the Viva Choir joined in with us and we sang our final piece.

I had a great time at the Mayor's Christmas party. It was my first time ever and I really enjoyed it. I hope there will be another Christmas party where we will be invited to sing.



---

# We Love Music and We Love Singing!

by Janet Wilson and Katie Loewen, Concert Choir

OCC has been a positive experience for both of us. We started last year in Viva Choir with little to no ability to read music, and by the end of the year we could sight-sing! We also got introduced to many nice people like Mrs. Prowse. Through the years we have been in these choirs, Mrs. Prowse has encouraged us in our musical "career" and taught us proper posture, proper breathing technique and mouth shape while we are singing.

We have made many great friends since we began and we both love Tuesdays because we get to go to choir. Mrs. Prowse has been teaching us so much about singing! She helps us in so many different ways!

We really liked the Remembrance Day ceremony, where we sang great songs and had a wonderful time. It was amazing when both the Chamber Choir and Concert Choir sang together. It was so cool!!

Even if we come to choir tired from school, we always leave feeling energetic and happy. We look forward to all of our upcoming performances! We love music and we love singing too! We both hope that we get the privilege to return again next year!

Until next time,  
Janet & Katie



---

## Three years of fun

by Maggie Campbell, Concert Choir



This is my third year in the Ottawa Children's Choir. Over these past three years my singing voice has matured so much. And this is all thanks to my wonderful director, Mrs Prowse. She has a bright and dynamic teaching style that makes my choir experience lots of fun! She has helped my voice realize its potential. Without Mrs Prowse I would still be singing solo in the shower. Now my voice has joined together with other voices and has made a harmony.

Thank you Mrs Prowse!

---

## My Four Years in the OCC

by Noah Boonov, Concert Choir



Each year in the Ottawa Children's Choir (OCC) has been so much fun! I started in Viva when I was in grade 4 (I still miss Mrs. B) and have been singing in the Concert Choir ever since. From the beginning I had Mrs. Prowse as my Choir director and she is the funniest and the sweetest person you would ever meet!

Our pianist Sally is really cool. She sits at the piano the whole time and plays for us, stops for us, starts playing for us again! Now that's patience!

There's also our Concert Manager, Wanda. She makes sure that EVERYTHING is perfect! She is one of the most organized people I know, even though she hates to admit it.

While in choir we get to do awesome performances! My favourite memories are singing at NAC with Eugene Levy and my opportunity to do a sketch with him. The workshop and performance with Rajaton at Dominion-Chalmers United Church was a great experience because we got to work with other choirs from around Ottawa.

Offhand, I think I have sung in at least 10 languages including Finnish, Hebrew and Mi'kmaq. Most of them I can't really remember! I can't really say I have a favourite song, but I really like the song Tishialuk Girls because it goes from fast to slow!!! It's a very exciting song!

I have also had the chance to sing songs that were written for our choir to sing first! Last summer I participated in Unisong! What amazes me about it is that material we sing is written by Canadian composers and we also were conducted by Pinchas Zukerman. The Ottawa Children's Choir is probably one of the best things that happened to me since I moved here!

---

# Magical Experience at Kitchissippi United Church

by Andrea Kenney, Concert Choir



The Kitchissippi church experience was maybe one of the most magical this year. On this beautiful winter morning, the minister was thanking us very much, and rewarding us with cookies for something we love doing. From the moment I entered the church and went looking for a place to hang my coat, there was always someone there, welcoming me with open arms. The feeling of joy was mutual because the congregations' smiles made us do the same.

Already present was the beauty of the church itself, the colourful stained glass windows with the sun shining through, but the joy and the music was an amazing addition. I felt so proud to be part of the choir making the sound that I heard. It was quite spectacular for my whole family to be listening to me sing.

I feel like the hard work we put into learning the songs perfectly really paid off, and the many practices were really worth it. I'm really proud, and I'm really thankful to Mrs Prowse for teaching us to sing the way we do.

I'm hoping to do this again in the future, in my next year at choir.

---

# My Experience at Kitchissippi United Church

by Eileen Kennedy-MacDonald, Concert Choir



Hello! My name is Eileen and I am a new member to The Ottawa Children's Concert Choir.



When the Concert Choir performed at Kitchissippi United Church, I was surprised at how everyone at the church was so welcoming, kind and friendly. I was especially surprised to hear that some of the women who attend Kitchissippi United Church organized a reception for everyone who attended the service, including our choir. We had the opportunity to gather together and enjoy cookies, coffee, and juice.

Kitchissippi United Church is not the biggest church in the world but there are beautiful stained glass windows in the sanctuary and the sun was shining through, reflecting the colours throughout! Last but not

least, the organ was very impressive! At my church we do not have an organ so it was a treat to hear it. Overall, I had a very positive experience at Kitchissippi United Church.

---

# What I Love About Choir!

By Sarah Manya McKeague, Concert Choir



Going to choir has taught me tons of stuff about singing that I never knew before.

- Choir helps develop your voice
- You sing all sorts of songs
- You sing songs in lots of different languages such as African, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, English and more
- You learn how to sing in harmony
- Choir helps your voice improve and teaches you how to project your voice
- Choir gives you the opportunity to perform in front of an audience. For example, we performed at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day, in the Battle of Atlantic, and at the Christmas concert in a beautiful church called Dominion-Chalmers. We also performed at Kitchissippi United Church and soon we will perform at schools.

The Ottawa Children's Choir has taught me a lot of things I didn't know before like the importance of good posture for singing and how to focus while singing. It also taught me different things about music that I had not learned in my piano lessons. It taught me how to sing music scores because singing music scores is not the same as playing music scores on the piano. When you are playing the piano you can see the notes you are playing. But when you sing, you have to find the notes inside you. Choir also helps your memory skills because you have to memorize the lyrics and the notes that you must sing.

Mrs. Prowse teaches us how to sing in harmony and arranges us to sing in parts (soprano, seconds and altos). Singing in harmony is really challenging because you have to keep your part even though it feels like everyone around you is singing different notes. It is difficult but once you have got it, it is worth all the hard work because it sounds beautiful.

I just want to end by saying that singing in the Ottawa Children's Choir has been a great experience for me. I really enjoy singing with the choir and it has been truly awesome!

---

# The OCC at Kitchissippi

by Tegan Hore-Kelman, Concert Choir

In the morning on Sunday, February 27, the Concert Choir members were all warming up their voices for this year's performance at Kitchissippi United Church. We had practised on Saturday and were all ready to sing. When we got to the church we practised with the kids from Kitchissippi Church, who joined us at the end of "Let It Shine" and for the church hymns. During the service we sang our five songs. The service was also very good, including the movie about shells. After it was over we all went to the Sunday school room where the super nice people of Kitchissippi had set out cookies for us. We all had so much fun!



---

## Choir Is Great!!!

by Myriam Hajesz, Viva Choir

We are learning so much about singing and music theory. We are learning songs in English, French or even German! It is great that I am making lots of new friends, even though we are not allowed to talk during rehearsal. I love choir and my little sister wants to join as soon as she is old enough.



## Choir Is REALLY Great!!!

by David Hajesz (Myriam's Dad)

I came into the choir with absolutely no choir experience of my own and the first time with my children (yes, Myriam has a younger sister that is anxious to be old enough to audition), so this has been quite a journey.

It is such a pleasure to see how Mrs. Prowse balances encouragement and discipline to keep the children focused. Thanks to her experience, she knows to demand a high-calibre performance from them – and they succeed! At least once per rehearsal the choir hits a phrase or a verse that sends the shivers up my spine.

I sometimes think that I should use the choir time to run errands or get other things done, but I am so fascinated with the process Mrs. Prowse uses to bring these amazing sounds out of the children that I always stay and listen. I indulge in witnessing the evolution of their sound as they learn and perfect new songs.

At the back of the room, the “closet chorister” in me is trying to copy the exercises the children are doing, without letting anyone know I am doing anything other than diligently working on my laptop.

---

## Our Visit to Colonel By Retirement Residence

by Janika Zwiers, Viva Choir

On Thursday, December 16, I visited the Colonel By Retirement Residence with the Viva Choir. We sang all of our Christmas songs. I could tell that the residents were happy that we came to visit them. There were refreshments at the end after we gave out Christmas cards. Sally played carols on the piano and I sang along.  
I LOVED IT!!!



---

# The Mayor's Christmas Party

by Aliya Frendo, Viva Choir

This is my view on the Mayors Christmas party.

This occasion was one to remember for the following reasons:

We entered the room and a burst of excitement was shared with all the splendid decorations and colours, and to add to that the activities were just simply magnificent.

However, the best part of the occasion for me was, of course, the singing.

We put foot on the stage with about 300 people watching us and the Viva Choir started. We sang several songs. Following us was the Concert Choir. After those wonderful experiences, we sang all together "Snowflakes Falling".

It was THE BEST singing experience I've ever had.



---

# Don't Miss This Year's Choir Banquet!

by Karen Clement, Chamber Choir

On Friday, May 27, 2011 the Ottawa Children's choir will be having its Third Annual Choir Banquet at St Anthony's Hall (just off Preston Street). For those of you who haven't attended this event before, it is a time at the end of the year where the choristers, their family, and friends can get together and have fun without worrying about performing or rehearsing. There is dinner with awesome food, dancing, and there is usually singing as this is a **choir** banquet. Awards and scholarships are also given out that night. Tickets are \$22 and include dinner and the dance afterwards.

I'm taking requests for music for the dance, so if you really want to hear a certain song, email the song title and the artist to me at [karenclement@rogers.com](mailto:karenclement@rogers.com). Hope you can make it!



---

## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 18	Spring Concert “The Voices of Our Song”
Tuesday, May 24 to Thursday, May 26	Reauditions
Friday, May 27	End-of-Year Banquet
Tuesday, May 31	Annual General Meeting
Friday, July 1	Unisong (Chamber and Concert Choir)

---

## Thanks to the Newsletter Team

Nancy Keyes, Editor  
Angela Kokkinos, Layout  
David Miller, Web Edition

*Thanks to all the contributors for your articles and photos.*

[www.ottawachildrenschoir.ca](http://www.ottawachildrenschoir.ca)