

## **From the Music Director**

Greetings and welcome to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Season of the Fairfield County Children's Choir! In this newsletter you will find details of our upcoming season and news from our choristers, staff and the Chamber Singers tour. The music staff of the FCCC met twice over the summer (and communicated endlessly by e-mail). On their behalf I would like to share with you how much we are constantly inspired by the enthusiasm and creative spirit of the FCCC community. We are looking forward to getting started on September 7!!

One theme for our Winter & Spring Concerts this season will be community singing. "Singing communities" may take many forms, both formal and informal, from the more than three hundred choristers of the FCCC to innumerable impromptu configurations of voices. Rollo Dilworth, our guest composer/pianist at last season's Spring Concert, recently wrote in an article entitled *Creating Singing Communities* in the publication *The Voice*, "Regardless of the term used to label a group of people making vocal music ... it is the communal nature of singing that creates the common bond." Our veteran choristers often talk about the special feeling they get when they sing in the FCCC.

Informal community singing "is not about how you sound, it is what you bring, knowing that singing together is a powerful thing and expecting that whatever you need to happen can be made to happen." These words from Ysaye Maria Barnwell, the composer of *Wanting Memories*, give us permission to sing our hearts out, even if the result is not very polished. A wonderful aspect of a large-group sing-along is that there is safety in numbers.

Informal singing can also be quite profound, as attested to by two established song-leaders. Bernice Johnson Reagon states, "When we sing we announce our existence." FCCC's great friend and most frequent guest artist, Nick Page says, "The ability to make and appreciate music is innate behavior coded into our genes. To be musical is to be human. Music teaches beauty. Creating beauty is an act of compassion. When we make music, we are making the world a more beautiful place. Music strengthens our cultural bonds with the past and future. Music helps to define who we are culturally. Music strengthens our cultural bonds with each other."

These writers all testify to the power of music. If these words inspire you – if you would like to experience this musical community bonding - I am pleased to invite all members of our community to join us for a special project as part of the FCCC Winter Concert.

## **The 2016 – 2017 Season**

For the FCCC Winter Concert on December 4 we are pleased to invite family members, alumni and friends to join us on stage for our entire finale. The selections will include *Dona Nobis Pacem*, *Haida*, *Angels We Have Heard on High* and *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, after which the entire audience will join in on *Winter Wonderland*. For those wishing to join us for these five pieces we ask that you attend at least two rehearsals in November to learn the music. For the first four selections the choir will have specific parts for sopranos, altos, tenors, basses and baritones. For *Winter Wonderland* all singers will be free to harmonize by ear as they wish. Sopranos and altos may rehearse either from 6:00 – 6:30 PM or 7:00 –

7:30 PM. Tenors, baritones and basses must attend from 7:00 – 7:30 PM. Please let us know if you will be participating so that we may prepare the sheet music and how we will place everyone on the stage.

For the eleventh time in our history, the FCCC (this time the Chamber Singers & Concert Choir) will again perform at **Carnegie Hall**, America's most famous concert hall. The show, on Thursday, December 1 at 8:00 PM, is entitled *Tim Janis: The American Christmas Carol* and is a fundraising concert benefiting Kate Winslet's *Golden Hat Foundation* which helps those living with autism. "The concert is a mixture of celebrities coming together to support the cause, along side some of the best student performers." Tim Janis has been putting together fundraising shows for them since 2012. Tim Janis is a musician, composer, director and producer. Here are links to Tim and Kate's websites.

<<http://timjanis.com/home/>> <<http://www.goldenhatfoundation.org>>.

One of the season's highlights will occur on December 10 when the Chamber Singers are again featured in a full-length concert as part of the prestigious Music For Youth Concert Series. This concert takes place at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Fairfield, one of the most acoustically splendid settings for a cappella music in Fairfield County. The director of Music For Youth, Misty Beyer, was so pleased last year that she intends to make this concert an annual Fairfield County tradition.

The first performance of the season features the FCCC on the ice singing the National Anthem for Opening Night of the Bridgeport Sound Tigers hockey team on October 10 at the Webster Arena. We also plan to again undertake our caroling project that was so successful and rewarding last year.

Our Broadway medleys in February will be *Wicked*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical* and *Hello Dolly!* In March our Chamber Singers will perform Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* with the Greater Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra. We will again perform for the Fairfield Holocaust Commemoration Ceremony, one of the most important events we undertake. Our Spring Concert will take place on May 13 at Fairfield University's Quick Center for the Arts.