



# The Chorus Newsletter

Published for and about the NOVA Community Chorus

## Annual Picnic

Thanks to Judy and Fred Wulff for hosting the annual picnic at their home. Choristers of various hues enjoyed the fellowship, good food and drink, not to mention croquet games! This social event has always been a highlight of the season, and we look forward to



Photo courtesy Debbie Peetz

## Chorus T-Shirts

It's altogether possible that you are seeing singers wearing the NOVA Community Chorus T-shirts. They come in a variety of sizes and colors.

## Welcome Singers

We welcome singers joining the NOVA Community Chorus this semester for the first time. You will find that returning singers are friendly and more than ready to help you.

Dr. Mark Whitmire is our director and Christine Hagan is our accompanist. Fred Wulff serves as stage manager, making certain that we get to the right place at the right time. Fred also prepares practice tapes or CDs for singers to rehearse with. He will tell you when they are ready. Be certain to bring a pencil to mark your scores because Dr. Whitmire will give you directions on how to sing at certain places. Relax and enjoy! We will have a good time and perform well.

## Other Summer Activities

Each summer, the Western Presbyterian Church in Washington is host to at least four "rehearsals" of major classical choral works. This summer, a couple of our singers attended the session devoted to the Mozart, Fauré, Brahms requiems and Bach's monumental B minor Mass.

**Page 2  
Medical  
Missionary:**

**Page 3  
Other Summer  
Events**

**Page 4  
Music  
Humor**

**Page 4  
Francis  
Poulenc**

# Choral Director as Medical Missionary

Dr. Mark Whitmire and Virginia Whitmire have spent numerous days this summer away from their careers in music.

With members of an outreach group, they flew to the country of Sudan to provide a variety of medical care to inhabitants of a town by the name of Akot.

Dr. Whitmire posted the following message via the Internet, subsequently sent to members of the chorus whose e-mail addresses were known .

Here is his first post:

*Dear Singers,  
I'm sitting in a Land Rover in the dark somewhere in Southern Sudan outside a building that looks to be some undercover intelligence installation stealing time on their satellite transmissions. If this message ends abruptly, you will understand why.*

*We've finished our fourth work day here in Akot. We've given meningitis injections to 400-600 people per day and treated scores of ugly injuries. The country is beautiful, though not what I expected. Similar in many ways to parts of Texas. Weather has been cool and it has rained most evenings. It is much more tropical than I expected. The people are beautiful, and singing is everywhere. Two days ago we gave injections to people at a prison.*



Dr. Whitmire gives injection

*It was a somewhat overwhelming affair. Today was at a school, which was very heartwarming and gratifying. I don't know yet what tomorrow will bring, but Friday is another prison. There is almost no wildlife in southern Sudan , although I was very excited to see four baboons on the way home yesterday. We've got lots of pictures and good video, though I'm sure none of it will really convey the sense of being here. It feels very safe. The people are very friendly. We've met many SPLA soldiers and even a brigadier general who, despite the heavy arms, was very friendly. I'm not sure if I'll have a way to communicate after this, but will if I can.  
Yours,  
Dr. W*



Dr. Whitmire cares for wound

His second message read:’

*Dear Singers-*

*We have returned safely from Africa . Our work in Southern Sudan was a profound experience. We inoculated 4500 persons against meningitis. I specialized in babies. I also spent a lot of time in wound care--debriding infections, draining abscesses, and other nasty stuff. Sudan is very poor. There is little food, no electricity or running water. Poor roads, mud huts, very little medical care. Without relief from the West, it would be a serious disaster. It is a war zone and there were plenty of soldiers and weapons around. In addition to all the tension between north and south ( Darfur ) that we hear so much about, there is considerable tension among local tribes. Nevertheless we were treated with kindness and graciousness by the Sudanese.*

*At the end of our work we went to Massai Mara in Kenya for a safari. We saw amazing animals and experienced a beautiful landscape. We exited Massai Mara in a single engine plane in lightening storm, which inspired a number of prayers. We arrived safely in Nairobi on a day that a truck bomb had exploded in the city, and the city was pretty tense. The trip home was 32 hours long. Thanks to all for the prayers - I could feel them.  
Yours-MW*

## Other Summer Events

Dr. Whitmire’s *Rock and Roll* review was held on Saturday 23 June 2007 at Immanuel Church on the Hill. It actually got going around 8:30. Dr. Whitmire was on bass, and Virginia Whitmire was on keyboard. Among the 40 or so attendees, were four NOVA singers. The group played songs from the 70s to which many people danced.

## Musical Humor

### Top five Reasons for Being a Soprano

- 5) To wear great costumes - like the hat with the horns on it.
- 4) How many world famous altos can you name?
- 3) When the fat lady sings, she's usually singing soprano.
- 2) When you get tired of singing the tune, you can sing the descant.

1) You can sing along with Michael Jackson.

### Top five Reasons for Being a Bass

5) If the singing job doesn't work out there's always broadcasting.

4) You never need to learn to read the treble clef.

3) If you get a cold, so what?

2) For fun, you can sing at the bottom of your range and fool people into thinking there's an earthquake.

1) If you belch while you're singing, the audience just thinks it's part of the score.

### Top five Reasons for Being a Tenor

5) Tenors never have to waste time looking through the self-improvement section of the bookstore.

4) You get to sing along with John Denver singing "High Calypso."

3) When you get really good at falsetto, you can make tons of money doing voice-overs for cartoon characters.

2) Gregorian chant was practically invented for tenors. Nobody invented a genre for basses.

1) You can entertain your friends by impersonating Julia Child.

### Top five Reasons for Being an Alto

5) You know you are better than the sopranos because everybody knows that women only sing soprano so they don't have to learn to read music.

4) You can sometimes find part time work singing tenor.

3) Altos get all the great intervals.

2) When the sopranos are holding some outrageously high note at the end of an anthem, the altos always get the last words.

1) When the altos miss a note, nobody gets hurt.

From the Web

## Gloria by Francis Poulenc

The *Gloria* by Francis Poulenc is one of his most celebrated works. The Gloria is scored for soprano solo, large orchestra, and chorus. It was premiered in 1961 in Boston, Massachusetts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Charles Munch. It is divided into six movements.

### [Description]

The first movement opens with a great chordal motif from the brass instruments, and the chorus enters singing in an accented and declamatory manner. The introduction begins in G major and modulates to a G minor chord, after which the woodwinds enter in parallel 4ths and 7ths. The chorus enters in double-dotted rhythms, reminiscent of the brass fanfare, in the key of b minor, accompanied by b minor triads over a pedal G in the bass. This relationship of juxtaposition between G major and b minor is an important one that returns throughout the piece.

The second movement opens with a quick brass introduction. A light tune repeats throughout this movement along with an often-changing time signature. This movement is in the key of C, with a few exceptions of diversions throughout. The last line of the text, beginning "Gratias agimus..." is in a chromaticized mode, giving an other-worldly character in the middle of the revelry of the movement.

The third movement is led by the dramatic solo soprano line after a woodwind introduction. The movement ends with a picardy third, preparing the way for the more joyful 4th movement.

The fourth movement is the shortest and resembles the second movement in the jocular nature of the orchestral phrases. The melodic lines are often pentatonic, and the quick tempo and rousing rhythms give a whirling and dancing impression, grounded by the constant return of the theme.

The fifth movement opens with woodwinds and resembles the third movement with the return of the soprano soloist as leader. The music is dark and mysterious, due in part to the inclusion of both an augmented fourth and an augmented fifth in the soprano's opening melodic line. The movement culminates in an E-flat minor chord, a fifth lower than the beginning B-flat minor, giving an uneasy, mysterious feeling to the end.

The sixth movement begins with alternating a-capella chorus and interjections of the orchestra intoning the fanfare theme from the first movement. After the introduction, the main setting of the text is reminiscent of the first movement, with the sixteenth note toiling line in the upper strings above a walking bass. The final section is preceded by a solo "amen" from the soprano, echoed by the chorus. The chorus repeats the text, this time over a mixture of b minor and G major chords in the orchestra. The fanfare theme from the first movement returns one final time before the final "amen", triumphantly slower and grander. The final "amen" intoned by the soprano on a D relates to both the b minor and G major chords played simultaneously to end the piece.

Edited from Wikipedia

The Chorus Newsletter welcomes news, articles and photographic contributions. Are you planning a recital? Tell us when and where and we will get the word out. Call the editor, Bob Trexler at 703 978-9171 or e-mail at [Rctrex@aol.com](mailto:Rctrex@aol.com).