



Grayson Hirst, Founder/Artistic Director

The Voice of Orpheus

A Newsletter of Sons of Orpheus - The Male Choir of Tucson

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Inside This Issue:

Back by Popular Demand	2
Celebration of Life	3
Tucson Meet Yourself	3
Rocky Roads to Orpheus	4
Profiling Jim Filipek	5
Here's to the Heroes	6
Our Line-up of CDs	7
A Master Percussionist	7
The Choir Gets Its Mojo Back	7
The Choir	8

Orpheus Performs at 13th Annual ASDB Holiday Benefit Concert

The Hogan Challenge



For the third consecutive year, tenor Jim Hogan has challenged the rest of the choir to raise more money for Tucson's Community Food Bank than he can raise all by himself. Our advantage in numbers is offset by the captive audience at the Hogan School of Real Estate. And Jim knows a lot of big hitters. The choir has won his two previous challenges, but not by much. The payoff is pizza and beer for the winner. We don't know how much pizza and beer Jim can consume, but the winning choir members have made Bianchi's Pizza on Silverbell very happy.

The real winner in this contest is Tucson's Community Food Bank. Spurred by Jim's challenge, Orpheus has in the past raised \$16,839, as reported by its marketing and communications director, Jack Parris.

Our men are going to be doing what we can this year to set a new record at a time when the Food Bank needs help as never before. Singers will be out canvassing neighborhoods for checks and nonperishable food items. Please remember that the Food Bank people can buy \$9 worth of food for every dollar they take in.

Continued on p. 2 - **Challenge**

OUR WINTER CONCERT SCHEDULE

Monday, Dec. 6 at 4 P.M.	14th Annual "Christmas at San Xavier" dress rehearsal with the <u>Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus</u> , <u>Mission San Xavier del Bac</u> . Open to the public
Tuesday, Dec. 7 at 6 and 8 P.M.	14th Annual "Christmas at San Xavier" concerts with the <u>Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus</u> at <u>Mission San Xavier del Bac</u> . For information call: Vern Lamplott, 520-407-6130
Wednesday, Dec. 8 at 6 and 8 P.M.	14th Annual "Christmas at San Xavier" concerts Repeat of above concert
Thursday, Dec. 9 at 6 and 8 P.M.	14th Annual "Christmas at San Xavier" concerts Repeat of above concert
Sunday, Dec. 12 at 3 P.M.	Sons of Orpheus Holiday Concert , <u>Tucson Estates</u> , Multi-Purpose Building, 5900 W. Western Way Circle, Tucson 85713
Wednesday, Dec. 15 at 7 P.M.	13th Annual Holiday Benefit Concert for the Community Food Bank with students from the Arizona Schools for the Deaf and the Blind. Berger Center for the Performing Arts, 1200 W. Speedway. Admission: Free with non-perishable food item(s) or tax-deductible monetary donation
Friday, Dec. 17 at 7 P.M.	Sons of Orpheus Holiday Concert <u>Valley Presbyterian Church</u> , 2800 S. Camino del Sol, Green Valley, 85614
Saturday, Jan. 29, 2011 at 7 P.M.	Orpheus performs Russian folk songs as guests of the Arizona Balalaika Orchestra in their 30th Annual Winter Concert of Russian Music and Dance . Center for the Arts, Proscenium Theatre, PCC West Campus, 2202 W. Anklam Rd., For tickets call the Box Office at: 520-206-6986.
Sunday, Jan. 30, 2011 at 2 P.M.	Arizona Balalaika Orchestra's 30th Annual Winter Concert of Russian Music and Dance Repeat of above concert



Challenge - Continued from p. 1

Anyone who has attended the concert at the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind will tell you they loved it! The kids are great, as are our guest performers. This year the concert is at 7 p.m., Wednesday, December 15th at the Berger Auditorium, 1200 W. Speedway. Admission is a nonperishable food item or a check for the Community Food Bank.

Did You Know?

- The Community Food Bank provides food for over 48,000 meals every day.
- During the course of a year, over 180,000 people receive family food boxes.
- About 65% of its cash revenue comes from contributions from individuals, foundations, corporations, and special fundraising events such as the ASDB Christmas concert.
- Over 97% of every \$1 raised goes directly to food and programs, less than 3¢ goes to administration costs.

If you'd like to participate in the Hogan Challenge, make out a check to the Community Food Bank and mail it to Sons of Orpheus, PO Box 31552, Tucson, AZ 85751. Write "Hogan" or "choir" on the memo line. We'll send your tax deductible donation on to the food bank.

Thanks!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND



Ragtime Cowgirl Jo

Jo Anne Anderson was an integral part of the Orpheus family from 1998 until she and her husband, Ed, moved to Carbondale, Colorado, in 2006, leaving us bereft of two great people. She's coming back to sing with us at our upcoming Christmas programs in Green Valley, at Tucson Estates, and at our annual fundraiser for the Tucson Community Food Bank at the Berger Center, a concert she instituted in 1998. The following is from an item in our April, 2005 newsletter:

The fact that Jo Anne Anderson uses the mirror in the ladies room to check the tilt of her hat is all that keeps her from being one of us. She's our traveling companion, our mother confessor, and our superior sister. In short, our pal.

In 1996 Jo undertook voice lessons with our founder/director, Grayson Hirst. He worked with her on some show

tunes, but Jo was afraid to ask him to hear what she liked to do best: yodel! Finally she got up the nerve and sprang it on him. "He about fell out of his chair," she remembers. When Grayson got his breath back, he said, "Have I got a spot for you!" He was thinking about the Orpheus cowboy set, always a part of our spring programs.

Now Jo's a hit with our audiences every time she steps onto the stage in one of her fancy cowgirl get-ups. When she starts to yodel, smiles light up the darkness beyond the footlights.

The yodel came naturally to her. From the time she was a kid driving a tractor on the family farm in Atwater, Minnesota, she found yodeling the best way to keep herself company over the growl of the engine.

Jo does a great deal for us off stage too. One of her mightiest efforts was to wangle the choir two Christmas concerts at the White House in 1998. Once she made up her mind that we ought to sing there, she started working through Congressman Ed Pastor's office to get us an invitation. She sent our tapes and kept up the pressure. The singers knew nothing about this, and Grayson knew only that she was working on an something really special. The invitation came, just as she had willed it to come!

We needed a venue for an extra Christmas concert to prepare for the White House, so Jo took care of that too. She got us a gig at the Berger Performing Arts Center on the campus of the Arizona School for the Deaf and the Blind, where Ed Anderson had been a student and a teacher.

That arrangement has grown into an enduring association with ASDB and the Tucson Community Food Bank. In the past 12 years Orpheus and the ASDB kids have raised several thousand dollars and collected several tons of food in connection with the concert.

Jo will reprise the first song she ever sang with us: "Jingle Bells—When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter." She has shined her boots, dusted off her hat, and warmed up her pipes for all three concerts, but her legacy is the string of ASDB concerts. We think somebody ought to raise a statue in her honor, an equestrian one, of course.

Celebration of Life, September 14th

We were honored to perform at the quarterly Celebration of Life memorial service at the Marshall Auditorium on the Tucson Medical Center campus. We sang "Homeward Bound" (text and music by Marta Keen),

"Dream of a Blessed Spirit" (text by William Butler Yeats, and music by Daniel J. Hall), and "Think on Me" (text by Mary, Queen of Scots and music by Victor C. Johnson.)

It was a moving ceremony. After brief speeches and the introduction of TMC hospice staff, the names of patients whose last days were eased by hospice care were read off and superimposed on nature photos shown on large, flat screen monitors. Family members were invited to come to the front of the room and light a candle to commemorate their loved ones.

Two names were especially poignant for us: Maurice Magee, a longtime member of the choir who, with his family, had created an endowment for our organization two years prior to his death, and Betty Villano, the beloved wife of Jerry, one of our tenors.

Tucson Meet Yourself, October 9th

Decked out in our colorful rubashkas (belted Russian peasant shirts), the Sons of Orpheus sang four numbers on the City Hall stage with our friends, the Arizona Balaika Orchestra. We had a good crowd for our performance, both in number and in appreciation, this latter suggesting that not many of them spoke Russian.



Photo by James F. Palka ©2010

Try this transliterated line from "Darogai D'linnoyu" (a tune you know as "Those Were the Days"): "Da spyenyey toy, shto vdal lye-tyit-zvnye-nya." Got it? OK. Now try it really fast. Don't hurt yourself. On stage it may have come out like "watermelon watermelon watermelon," but because we had nailed all the slow pas-

sages, the audience thought we were doing fine with this one too. They clapped along and smiled.

The group that followed us on stage was the Sino Choir. It was somewhat more authentic than we were. All of them were born in China. One of their members, a handsome young man who played a love song beautifully on a bamboo flute, told the audience that in China a suitor would take up a position at the foot of his beloved's house late in the evening and play his song. If the girl came down, she was his. You got the feeling that he had often heard footsteps on the stairs.

I discovered that one of the best things about wearing a rubashka on my stroll around the site after our gig, checking out the talent on the several stages and the delicacies in the food booths, was that I enjoyed becoming part of the *mise-en-scène*. I nodded and smiled at other performers in their exotic costumes and sniffed at the mere public that cluttered the ways in their everyday garb, although I would not have objected if one of them asked me for my autograph.

Lost in this fantasy, I got into trouble. An elderly woman walked up to me and asked me where I was from. I heard myself say "Moskva," the way the Russians say it. She was apparently elated to know it, for she hugged me and rattled off something that I could tell right away was not English.

I had faked Russian to an audience when I had to, but you can't fake Russian to a Russian woman who's got hold of you. She gave me a steely look when I stammered that I was really just a plain old American. The moment turned as chilly as January on the Great Steppe. My apology did not warm her up. It was only after she had disappeared into the crowd that the Tucson sun shone again.

Members of our choir who arrived early had time to take in the Moonstruck Coyotes on the Church Avenue stage, a pickin' and grinnin' quartet of really good singers and musicians. Three of them are members of Orpheus—Jim Hogan, Jim Gates, and Frank Hartline. We hope these varmints will grace the stage with their act during our spring concerts.

Rocky Roads to Orpheus

Rescued by Asthma and a Good Woman
—Ned Mackey

I was born and raised in a high desert town on the east side of the Oregon Cascades. My growing up was mostly undistinguished, except, perhaps, for music. I sang in church and school choirs, in a quartet for Easter sunrise services on a volcanic mound in the center of town, and at evenings in the park where I delivered a white boy's "Old Man River."

When I went off to the University of Oregon on the other side of the mountains, I began to develop asthma due to certain molds and pollens that proliferated in the Willamette Valley. During my sophomore year my breathing difficulties became so severe that eventually I was unable to participate in the only class I had been attending on a regular basis, the University of Oregon Singers.

Asthma was not my only problem. Away from the bosom of my family, I began to sink into a shocking state of dissolution. In fact, not long after I escaped the valley, the movie *Animal House* was shot in the fraternity house where I had lazed and wheezed. I like to think that something of my spirit remained within those walls to inform the movie makers about collegiate profligacy, and I take some credit for the movie's success.

A few weeks into my junior year I knew I needed to start over again. Managing one word per breath, I asked my sweetheart, Pat Crawford, if she would marry me and make a new life in a college town where it rained only now and then. She said yes, and two days after Christmas we headed for the Sonoran Desert.

When my transcripts arrived at the University of Arizona, the registrar informed me that I would not be allowed to pollute the regular daytime student body. I enrolled in evening classes and got a day job. My grades improved and my asthma diminished. I joined a folk group called the Bean Alley Boys, and for a couple of years sang on weekends for \$5-a-night and beer. My wife's firm direction kept me on the straight and narrow right through grad school and into a teaching and coaching career I enjoyed immensely.

After I retired from the coaching part of the job and started living normal work days, I felt the urge to sing again. In 1997 I heard about the Sons of Orpheus and went to my first rehearsal. It was a scary experience after all those years of using my vocal chords mostly for yelling at people. I stayed with it because I liked the repertoire, the male voice choir sound, the camaraderie of a bunch of good guys, and, OK, the spotlight.

Rescued by and from a Boys Choir
—Chuck Dickson

I started singing professionally when I was nine years old. Because I was a holy terror in elementary school, my parents put me in a church choir to keep me occupied. Once a month the choir master would give each of us a small bank envelope containing a few coins. Our pay was based on our attendance at rehearsals and at services. When I sang a soprano solo, I got an additional quarter!



Chuck, on the second row down from the top; the tall one.

It took a lot of our time, something we had in those years before soccer moms had to haul their children to an enormous variety of after-school activities. We boys rehearsed Tuesday and Thursday afternoons by ourselves, and then on Friday evening we rehearsed with the men. Every Sunday we sang a long choral service at 11 a.m. and then returned at 7:30 p.m. for Evensong.

Boys had to wear proper black leather shoes, woolen black cassocks with many buttons, short white surplices called cottas, wide, stiff Buster Brown collars (needing collar buttons), and ribbons around our necks tied in a bow. Before the service "choir mothers" would help us get into these complicated vestments.

After my voice changed, I did not sing again until I finished college. I then returned to my old church and sang with the basses in a choir consisting by that time of men and women. We rehearsed only on Thursday evenings. No more rehearsals on Friday, an evening for which the younger men had other plans. And, as an adult chorister, I no longer had to wear a Buster Brown collar with a ribbon bow.

Through many years of college teaching in a variety of places, I continued to sing in community-based choral groups. When I retired and moved to Tucson over a decade ago, I saw a little notice in the newspaper about joining the male choir of Tucson.

So I immediately joined the Sons of Orpheus, and a few years later the Arizona Repertory Singers. I have particularly enjoyed the foreign tours with Orpheus. Now I get to wear a tuxedo, and sometimes even a black cowboy hat. And I don't need any help to don my get-up.

PROFILING



Photo by Iván Berger

JIM FILIPEK

Jim Filipek is one of those people who find out early in life that their brain is wired for music. Poor Mozart had to shinny up the leg of a piano bench to get to a keyboard, but lucky young Jim learned the keyboard on a toy accordion that he could drag around wherever he went. His

accordions grew as he did, and eventually he graduated to a \$2,000 Italian Cimbelli which he paid for with money he earned playing weekend gigs in his hometown, Schenectady, NY.

Jim went to college at the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam, an education interrupted in the middle by a two-year stint in Viet Nam after he lost his exempt status as a result of his decision to spend a semester playing bridge. He enlisted and learned communications before he shipped out. Viet Nam changed Jim in ways that can happen when you get blown out of a building, twice! He returned home with a few scars, exterior and interior, but no permanent damage.

He finished his bachelors degree at the Crane School and came west with his bride, Candice. He entered in the masters program in the School of Music at Arizona State University. In 1972 and '73 he taught choral music at Apollo Junior High School in Tucson.

The Filipeks' two chicks, Heather and Brent, had hatched during this time, and, since teaching was not feathering the nest, Jim gave up the classroom to sell pianos and organs for the next seven years. He had a nice stretch when he racked up at least a quarter of a million dollars in sales for four consecutive years, each time earning a two-week European trip for two from the Kimball Piano Company. But it was hard work—straight commission, sixty-five hours a week, with no vacation time.

When Candice suggested that he find a new job or a new wife, he enrolled at Pima College, earned an associates degree in electronics, and found a job at Tucson Electric Power. He spent the next twenty-seven years there in various technical positions. During his working life he served in the Air Force Reserve for six years and the Army Reserve for fifteen, all the while directing church choirs and composing music for them.

Retiring from TEP in 2006, Jim delighted in the freedom to do some serious singing. He had attended one of our rehearsals a couple of years previously and knew we were the choir for him.

Of course, Jim works almost as hard for us as he did in jobs that made him a living. Last summer he spent about three hours a day for two months making us rehearsal CDs. He assists Jeff Handt, our librarian, in organizing music that has piled up by the ton over the years (see our repertoire at sonsoforpheus.org). He is the baritone section leader and a member of the executive committee. He has also arranged several pieces for us in a wide array of styles from R. Alex Anderson's catchy "Mele Kalikimaka" to the somber traditional English folk song "A Maid in Bedlam."

Our paragon's only flaw seems to be that he plays golf once a week. But this is probably a good thing. We must be careful not to work him too hard because we don't want Candice to give him another ultimatum.

Here's to the Heroes

Orpheus has performed at the annual Veterans Day Concert at the VA Hospital for several years. In the afternoon on November 11th, after singing the national anthem and listening to actor, dancer, and singer Ben Vereen, we sang three patriotic numbers to honor those who have served their country. One of those numbers was John Barry's "Here's to the Heroes," transcribed and adapted for us by Tom Wentzel, one of our own.

This year we thought it would be a good idea to talk to a couple of vets in our audience:



Photo by James F. Palka ©2010

Mike Matthews is a jolly fellow who grew up in Syracuse, NY. He began his military career right out of high school, assigned as a Navy corpsman because he told his recruiter he didn't want to shoot anyone. After intensive training he was attached to the 1st Marine Division in Guam and then sent to Viet Nam where he worked in the jungles and in operating rooms, assisting with what he calls "meatball surgery" to get wounded soldiers back home or back to fighting. In 1972 he left the Navy and took a three-year break from the military. He then joined the Army, his home for the next fifteen years including two years as a recruiter and six months as a medic in Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Mike's happy with his VA medical care and grateful that U.S. presidents, both Democratic and Republican, have supported the VA's mission.

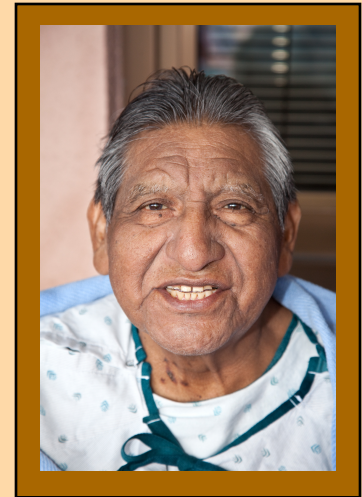


Photo by James F. Palka ©2010

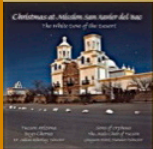
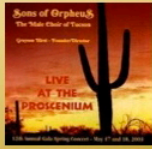
Fermin Coronado has been a patient at the VA hospital since September 28th. He is recovering from surgery for cancer associated with Agent Orange, a substance he came in contact with in Viet Nam. He's getting better, but he has a long way to go before his wife, Guadalupe, can take him home. He's due for radiation treatments and physical therapy. Fermin joined the Army when he was 22. He served in Viet Nam from 1967 through 1969. After he mustered out, he worked in a mine. When it closed, he went back to school to prepare for a job in social work and then later in law enforcement. He is satisfied with the care he has been given at the VA and appreciative of the people who attend to him.



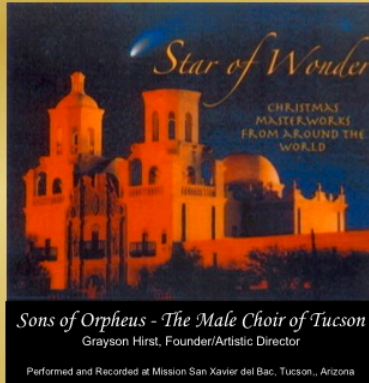
Photo by James F. Palka ©2010

The Editor, Ned Mackey, interviewing Mr. Coronado

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A Master Percussionist



Tamara Williams

Tamara Williams is in her first semester of a master's program in percussion performance at the University of Arizona, having completed her bachelor's degree in music education at Sam Houston State University. A Houston native, Tamara has worked with the Od-

yssey Brass Angels, Cricket Communication Promotions, and several musical theater and high school percussion ensembles, marching bands, and drum lines. She is currently part of the UA's musical theater production of *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. She is also a member of CrossTalk, an ensemble that, according to their website, is "shredding the envelope of electronic percussion."

Tamara lights up the stage with her talent and her energy. She drummed away during our patriotic numbers at the Veterans Day concert. In our Christmas concerts she will play the djembe, a skin-covered hand drum shaped like a large goblet. We need the djembe (two, actually. Iván Berger plays the other) in a number called "Betelehemu," a carol we sing in Yoruba, a West African language.

The Choir Gets Its Mojo Back



Drawing by Bob Swaim

Bass and percussionist Iván Berger, an Orpheus veteran, has moved back to town after a seven-year stint as a transient. Perhaps transient is not quite the right word. Iván took a job in Phoenix in 2003 but continued to drive to Tucson for Saturday rehearsals and concerts. Now that he's again with us full-time in the city he loves, he can rehearse twice a week and take a position on the choir's Executive Committee. And

he can spend a lot less time on the phone designing this newsletter.

Iván is a high-energy guy. You'll be able to see this at our holiday concerts when he performs his Spanglish version of "The Night Before Christmas," the beloved poem attributed to Clement Clark Moore (1779-1863). Moore, who didn't want this poem to be published in the first place, would be especially surprised to hear it start:

"'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the casa,
Not a creature was stirring.
¡Hijo! ¿Qué pasa?"

Iván's wife, Patricia, is certainly glad to spend less time on I-10. She almost never missed our concerts during her sojourn in Phoenix, thus giving a whole new meaning to the term "roadie."

Iván is a staff interpreter at Pima County Juvenile Court which is a national model court.



The Voice of Orpheus

Sons of Orpheus is supported in part by grants from the Tucson Pima Arts Council and the Arizona Commission on the Arts with funding from the State of Arizona and the National Endowment for the Arts.

**First Tenors:**

Brandon Dale
Jeffrey Dunn
Eugene Friesen
John Kamper
Tom McGorray
Bruce Mortensen
James Naughton
Jim Tomlinson
Jerry Villano
Dick Wroldsen

Seconds Tenors:

Dave Burns
Jim Hogan
Van Honeman
Bob Kurtz
Richard Miller
Mike Negrete
Doug Nordell
Chris Richied
Larry Ross
Larry Sayre

Baritones:

Mike Bradley
Chuck Dickson
Pete DiCurti
John Evans
Jim Filipek
Cameron Fordyce
Michael Fraser
Frank Hartline
Jim Kitchak
Ned Mackey
Rick Sack
Raymond Tess

Basses:

Ronald Bailey
Iván Berger
Jeffrey Handt
Tom Kane
Jess Koehn
George Ledbetter
Scott Montgomery
Gary Smyth
Melvin Swingler
Steve Wafler
Thomas Wentzel

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