

# Masterworks

MASTERWORKS CHORALE • TOLEDO, OHIO • DECEMBER 2020

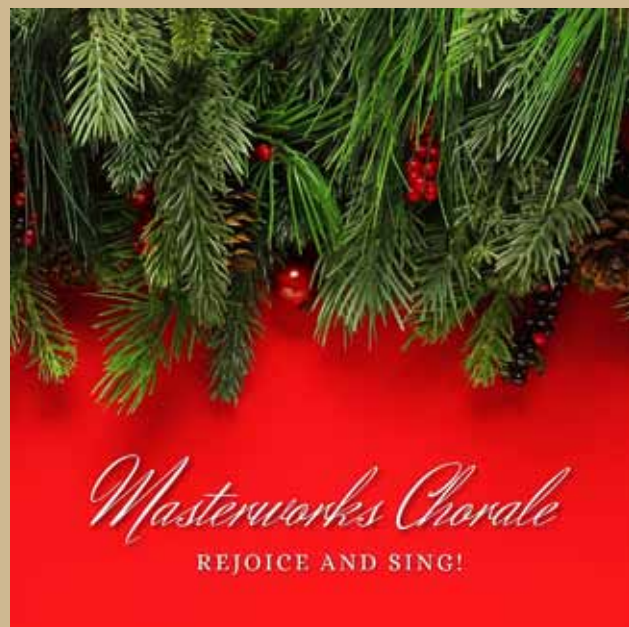
## REJOICE AND SING!

*we'll send you this beautiful cd  
to thank you for your support*

Masterworks Chorale can still be a part of your holiday traditions this year! As the holidays approach, we're preparing a gift for you that will bring the music of the Chorale into your home. For all donations of \$25 or more, we'll send you a thank-you gift: our new Christmas CD, which features live performances from our last seven years.

Especially now, when concert revenue is absent, we rely on your generous support. We hope that you'll remember how valuable Masterworks Chorale is to you, and that you'll approach your donation as if you're buying tickets to a Christmas Concert. Not only will you make it possible for the Chorale to continue connecting lives through choral music this season, but you'll ensure that the Chorale will be as strong as ever in future seasons when we finally can sing again for you in person.

Please visit [www.masterworkstoledo.com](http://www.masterworkstoledo.com) for more information and to make your donation!



## *safely rehearsing & recording a program to be streamed online in march singers stay tuned and connected via short-range fm radio*

There are few more efficient ways to spread an airborne virus than getting a group of 40 singers together in a room for a rehearsal. So, how is Masterworks Chorale to fulfill its mission of connecting lives through choral music?

During the summer months, Artistic Director Tim Cloeter, President Meghan Schmidbauer, Vice President Jim Witter, Treasurer Colleen Geftos, Secretary Michael Docis, and Office Manager Chelsie Cree came up with a way for Chorale singers to rehearse together safely using wireless microphones, a short-range FM radio transmitter, their cars, and their car radios at

Perrysburg First United Methodist Church, where Tim also serves as music director.

The pictures above show how it's done: On the left, Tim carefully places a wireless microphone into a large plastic bag held by Bass Patrick Bowman. Patrick never touches the mic. In the middle picture, Tim conducts a group of from six to eight singers sitting safely in their own cars, which have become, in effect, individual sound booths. They can hear each other and Tim via short-range FM radio. (There are six such groups, and each meets weekly for one hour.) On the right, her score perched on her steering

wheel and her mic safely ensconced in a baggie, Soprano Kathy Dennis rehearses with the other singers in her octet. Lives are connected through choral music!

The method has allowed the Chorale to rehearse and record a wonderful program of Renaissance, Romantic, and modern music. Tim will compile the recordings into a program which will be streamed one evening in March. Audience members will be able to listen at home, and donations will be gratefully received. Stay tuned for details!

— story & photos, Tom Sheehan, Tenor



*we began to see  
opportunity where before we had  
identified only loss*

*Jim*

*from the director*  
**stay tuned: a fitting motto for our 49th season**

Now is a tough time to be a choir. Since singing is especially good at producing aerosol particles (those microscopic droplets that are large enough to carry the coronavirus but small enough to float in the air for hours), there is simply no safe way for singers to gather in a room together to sing. When the pandemic emerged in the U.S. in March, all our activities ground to a halt—we couldn't gather to rehearse, we couldn't gather to perform, we couldn't in good conscience ask our audience to join us in a room while we sang. We struggled to envision how we could fulfill our mission to connect lives through choral music, and we found ourselves waiting for better news. "Stay Tuned" is a fitting motto for our 49th season because, first of all, it evokes that feeling of waiting.

Eventually, though, we began to see opportunity where before we had identified only loss. Even if we couldn't sing together, we could still hold virtual classes in which we studied sight-singing, and music theory, and vocal technique. In the time we would have spent rehearsing for a Christmas Concert, we've been building our skills, and "Stay Tuned" took on the meaning of getting a tune up. That was a relief and we started to

feel a connection, but we still longed for actual music-making. We didn't pursue any of the asynchronous options available (the Virtual Choir model) because fundamentally we believe that our connection with each other stems from being truly together in the moment and breathing as one, but we got excited when we found on-line the work of a former classmate of mine that demonstrated the use of analog audio equipment to allow singers sequestered individually in their cars to rehearse and record music as a vocal ensemble. Now "Stay Tuned" reminds us of the advanced and deeply musical work we're doing together in which we develop impeccable intonation, that is, we truly sing in tune.

Considering the deep loss we felt when we had to cancel the rest of our season last March, it's so encouraging that we found ways to adapt rather than simply lament, that we found these good ways to stay tuned. Now it's your turn to "Stay Tuned" in the sense of tuning in. I urge you to tune in by visiting [our website](#) regularly so that you can keep track of all the ways we're connecting lives this year. We all look forward to the time when we can finally gather with you again to share our enjoyment of choral music.

*five chorale members sing gently "together apart" with 17,567 others*



*Chorale soprano Kathy Kress (middle row, right) was one of 17,572 singers worldwide who performed "Sing Gently" in Eric Whitacre's Virtual Choir 6 last spring. Also in the middle row is Composer Whitacre, who is conducting. Experience this lovely piece at <https://virtualchoir6.com>. This screenshot is at two minutes and twenty-nine seconds into the video.*

"Is it possible to make beautiful music together, no matter how far apart we are?" This is the question that Eric Whitacre, choral conductor/composer *extraordinaire* asked himself ten years ago. To answer it, he created a new kind of choir—the virtual choir. Before the pandemic, there had been five such choirs. Wanting to give a gift to the world during a terrible time, Whitacre wrote a lovely piece, "Sing Gently," and created Virtual Choir 6. He set up a website where, at no cost, 17,567 singers in 129 countries accepted his invitation to learn the music, get tips on how to record it, and upload their recordings. Once the videos were uploaded, a team of artists and technicians assembled them into a wonderful virtual creation.

*May we sing together always  
May our voice be soft*

— Eric Whitacre

Five Chorale singers, Soprano Kathy Kress, Altos Kate Hennicken and Shelly Schaefer, Tenor Tom Sheehan, and Bass Tim Langhorst participated. "It was so much fun." Kate said. "I had to wait until my little babe went to sleep to record. It was a challenge to find a setup with my phone and computer, find a space in my house with no background, and get just the right take. I ended up spending about an hour for two takes before I had to wrap it up and go to sleep myself."

To experience "Sing Gently," visit <https://virtualchoir6.com>. Of the five Chorale participants, you're likely to find only Kathy Kress at 2 minutes and 29 seconds.

Whitacre's way of singing "together apart" is different from the method the Chorale has been using this fall (See page 1). While practicing and recording for a virtual choir, singers stay home. They can hear only a practice track and themselves. They don't hear the other singers until the release of the final product. In the Chorale's method, on the other hand, singers can hear each other in rehearsal. They stay tuned as they sit alone in their cars.



## chorale alto: shelly schaefer all about connecting people in both music and medical treatments

Shelly Schaefer, Chorale alto, is all about connecting people. In her professional life she connects people to needed medical resources, and as a singer, she connects people to music.

After completing medical school and starting residency, Shelly contracted a rare disease that caused genetic mutations and produced a tumor that resulted in excruciating pain.

"Being that sick was one of the best things to happen to me," Shelly says. "It helped me realize what it was like to be truly frightened." This transcendent experience resulted in a change in her career. Shelly established a medical advocacy business representing patients throughout the country who have complicated and rare diagnoses.

"We use national databases to bring together patients with rare clinical diseases with the best physician or best clinical trial for their particular condition," Shelly says.

Music as well as medicine has always been part of Shelly's life. "My father was a pianist and an audiophile," Shelly says. "We always had music playing. And I could play the piano by ear when I was four years old."

In high school, Shelly was introduced to choral music through school choir director Louie Davis. Shelly says, "It changed my life. I love the beauty

of choral music, and right after high school I began singing in the Benjamin Locke Chorale, which became Masterworks Chorale."

The connection to choral music and the Chorale continued as a college student at The University of Toledo. Shelly was attending an ecology class taught by Elliot Tramer, who would become a bass with the Chorale. She had her guitar with her that day, and she and Elliot ended up playing in a bluegrass group together for decades.



Alto Shelly Schaefer

Shelly relates to the Chorale's mission of connecting lives through choral music. "One of my favorite things is the moment when everyone in the choir breathes together—all of the study and the practice coming together at that dramatic moment of breath. It is a magical moment with the audience when the longing for beauty and connection we all have as human beings resonates together in the music we are singing."

Shelly has thought about the importance of breath during the pandemic. "Breath is so critically important. It is important for Covid patients as well as singers in choirs. And during the pandemic we have been limited in our ability to share breath together. I look forward to the time when we can all actually breathe deeply together again." — Tim Langhorst, Bass

*"one of my favorite things is the moment when everyone in the choir breathes together"*

## alyssa & sophie: two former interns return to chorale as adults



Soprano Alyssa Steider at her wedding in July. With Alyssa: her husband, Chorale tenor Adam Steider; her mother, Chorale soprano Debbie Horner; and her dad, Jack, who ushers at many Chorale concerts.

banana bread a specialty), and working out. I have to work out so I can bake!" she says. Welcome back to the Chorale, Alyssa!

**Soprano Alyssa Steider** sang the 2013 Christmas concert with the Chorale as an intern. Graduating from her homeschool high school in 2014, she attended Bob Jones University, graduating in 2018 with a degree in early childhood education. Then she taught kindergarten at a private school in Michigan until June 2020. Married in July to Chorale Tenor Adam Steider, whom she met in a 2014 Archbold, Ohio community theater production, Alyssa now substitute teaches all grades and subjects. Besides music and teaching, Alyssa says, "I love Broadway, outdoor activities, baking (blueberry

**Soprano Sophie Wilson**, who interned with the Chorale last year, graduated in June from Sylvania Southview High School, where her choir teacher was Chorale Soprano Lindsay Andrews. (Her middle school choir teacher was Chorale Alto Emily Georgeson, so there are three lives fulfilling the Chorale's mission of connecting lives through choral music!)



Soprano Sophie Wilson

Like all of us, Sophie's life has been deeply affected by the pandemic. Preferring in-person education to distance learning, she has opted to put off her studies at Owens Community College until next semester. At Owens, she hopes to sing in the Owens choir under the direction of her voice teacher, Janet Taylor. A well-rounded musician, Sophie hopes that she'll be able to play flute in the Owens band as well. (She explains that there are special "instrument masks" that allow wind musicians to play in groups safely.) Her goal is a degree in music education.

In the meantime, Sophie is working the late shift, till four a.m., at Taco Bell, where she does all the different jobs. She comes to car rehearsals on Saturday afternoons, takes voice lessons via Zoom with Janet Taylor, and looks after her 22-year-old pet conure. Welcome back, Sophie!

### hear alyssa & sophie's favorite christmas music on spotify

Alyssa's Christmas Playlist



Sophie's Christmas Playlist



Celebrate the holiday season with playlists curated by the two former interns who have returned to sing with the Chorale as adults. (See article above.) [Click here](#) to hear Alyssa's playlist, and [here](#) to hear Sophie's.

Enjoy. Don't have a Spotify account? It's easy to sign up, and there's a free version. Just go to [spotify.com](https://spotify.com).



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# Masterworks Chorale

connecting lives through choral music

masterworks *Matters*

## Go Ahead! Slit the seal! Inside you can learn all about...

Our new Christmas CD, *Rejoice and Sing!* • How Chorale members rehearse and record safely during the pandemic • Artistic Director Tim Cloeter considers the motto for our 49th season: "Stay Tuned" • How five Chorale members joined 17,567 others last spring to create great choral beauty • Two former interns who now sing with the Chorale as adults • The interesting life of one of our altos, Shelly Schaefer • And more!!!!



### Mark Your Calendar and Join Us!

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| <b>Christmas CD Release</b><br>Tuesday, December 1, 2020   | <b>Virtual Chamber Concert</b><br>Sunday, March 28, 2021<br>Stay tuned for details! |
| <b>Rebroadcast of Our 2019 Christmas Concert</b><br>New Life<br>Christmas Day at 2 p.m.<br>WGTE-FM, 91.3 | <b>Fresh On-Air</b><br>Sunday, June 13, 2021<br>Stay tuned for details!             |

### Contact the Chorale

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# REJOICE AND SING!

In return for your generous donation of \$25 or more, we will send you our new Christmas CD, *Rejoice and Sing!* as a token of our gratitude! Details inside!

