

# masterworks

# Matters

MASTERWORKS CHORALE • TOLEDO, OHIO • MAY 2019

young singers and dancers to join  
masterworks chorale for our  
collage concert

## flora & fauna

collage concert  
a celebration of life & of the plant and animal kingdoms

At times whimsical, at times poignant, with music of several eras from the Renaissance to the present, the Chorale's Collage Concert continues our season theme, "The Wonders of Nature." It is a celebration of life and of the plant and animal kingdoms.

Enjoy some *Animal Crackers*—settings by Eric Whitacre that enhance the humor of verse by Ogden Nash. "The Cow," "The Canary," "The Eel."

Or the mood-scapes of Benjamin Britten's *Flower Songs*.

Or the cool of the evening of "Calme des nuits" by Camille Saint-Saëns.

And so much more.

Adding to the visual beauty of the event will be choreography by Nigel Burgoine, presented by the dancers of his Ballet Theatre of Toledo...

And the vocal color and texture of the outstanding Children's Choir of Northwest Ohio: Bel Canto Choir directed by Amanda Rasey.

Join us for what promises to be a delightful conclusion to our 47th season, Sunday, June 2, 3 p.m., at the Franciscan Center at Lourdes University. Note the new day, time, and place!

Photo: Wasplike fly on buttercup at Oak Openings Metropark in May last year, by Tom Sheehan



photo by Patrick Wolff

Dancers of the Ballet Theatre of Toledo



Children's Choir of Northwest Ohio: Bel Canto Choir





*music and what we  
believe about it was at work  
connecting our  
voices and hearts and spirits and lives*

*Jim*

*from the director  
in memoriam: joseph flummerfelt*

On Friday, May 3, I participated in an extraordinary event: the memorial service for Joseph Flummerfelt at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Indianapolis. Dr. Flummerfelt was an icon of choral music, a teacher and conductor at Westminster Choir College for 33 years, the director of choral activities at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston for 36 years, and the chorus master for the New York Philharmonic for 44 years. He prepared choruses for hundreds of performances with prestigious orchestras and notable conductors including Leonard Bernstein, Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, and Robert Shaw. Joe was also the principal teacher in my master's degree 28 years ago, and the most influential teacher in my career.

It was an extraordinary event in part because it was entirely planned by Joe himself; in the few weeks between the discovery of his brain tumor and the unexpected stroke that ended his life on March 1, he chose every piece of music, each organist and conductor, each Bible reading and liturgical word, and even the eulogists: a niece, a former Westminster colleague, and a former student. Like so much of his work, the service designed by Joe was brilliant—remarkably beautiful and expressive music for organ and choir and congregation, performed by exceptionally capable musicians, presented in just the right order. For us alumni who formed the 100-voice choir, the anthems, nearly all of which I had sung under Joe's direction, were both a celebration of his life and a grieving remembrance. (There was literally a case of tissue boxes distributed among the choir, and I must have used half a box myself.)

At the service, I was reminded of three deeply significant truths about conducting choral music, truths that are central to the work I do and to which I felt moved by the service to re-dedicate myself. The first concerns trust. One of the eulogists reminded us that Joe considered the relationship of conductor to singers to be "circular," not "over-under," and that trusting himself and his singers was crucial for music-making. This is why he was opposed to showing subdivision of the beat as a conductor (through some rhythmic tic or gesture): it was evidence that the conductor did not trust the inner motors of his singers. Joe explained in Donald Nally's book *Conversations with Joseph Flummerfelt* that "at a certain point, you have to let go and trust that the technical aspects will hold. You need to just let it sing and, in a very real sense, to let the performance evolve organically

and spontaneously." This was beautifully demonstrated by one of the conductors at the service, Andrew Megill, a friend of mine and a fellow Westminster alumnus, when in a soft phrase from the Brahms Requiem he stood before the choir completely and deeply letting go of the music while remaining completely and deeply with us singers in that moment.

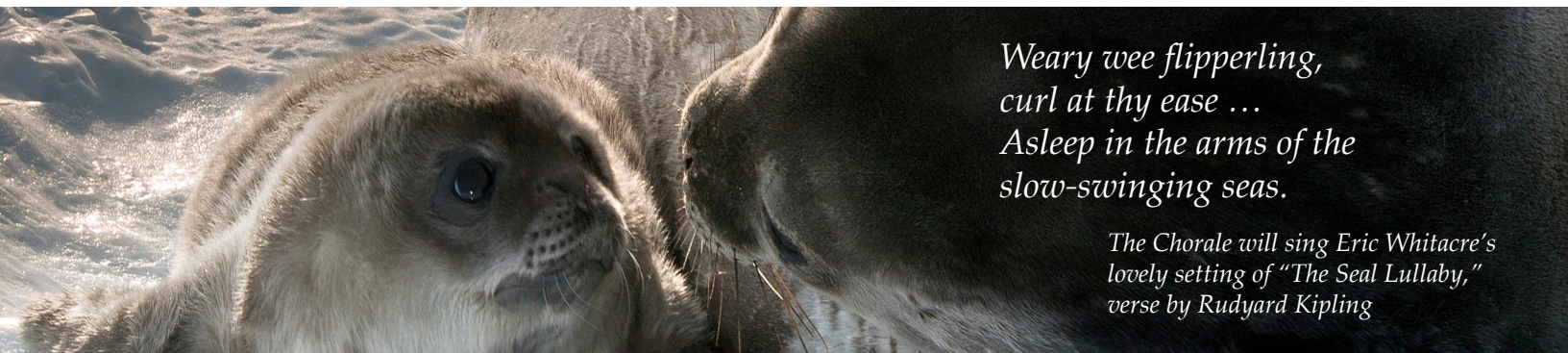
The second truth has to do with breath. Understanding the important function of breath in choral conducting is unique to Joe's pedagogy. There is so much that is influenced by the conductor's preparatory breath: tempo, dynamic, color, vowel shape, character, even vocal technique. But perhaps more than everything else, a preparatory breath properly

*at a certain point,  
you have to  
let go and trust*

taken establishes and offers a vulnerability that invites singers to be honestly and genuinely expressive. Singing is the most personal and vulnerable kind of music-making because our instrument is within us, so it's especially important that we all

breathe in a way that softens our defenses and sheds our fears. And every time we all breathe simultaneously in that way, the world is transformed.

Perhaps the most striking truth on display at the service, however, was that choral music truly does connect lives. There we were, that large chorus of generations of alumni connected to Joe and to each other by past profound choral experiences, and even in those present moments of singing, that music and what we believe about it was at work connecting our voices and hearts and spirits and lives, and it was at work connecting us to the congregation and Joe's family in ways that mere words of condolence, regardless of how heartfelt, simply could not. This connection holds across time as well; Andrew remarked that the students of our students' students will be affected by what we learned from Joe Flummerfelt, and that the world will be more beautiful because of it. May you and I continue to have authentic and artful experiences with Masterworks Chorale that connect us to each other in beautiful and meaningful ways.



*Weary wee flipperling,  
curl at thy ease ...  
Asleep in the arms of the  
slow-swinging seas.*

*The Chorale will sing Eric Whitacre's  
lovely setting of "The Seal Lullaby,"  
verse by Rudyard Kipling*

## father and son chorale president brian tittl and son share chorale experience



Intern Ben Tittl and his dad Brian, Chorale president, performed together at the Chorale's recent fundraiser.

### baritenor brian's range extends far beyond music

Baritenor? It's a real word, and the Chorale has a fine one, our president, Brian Tittl. While Brian can manage a G above middle C with ease, audiences have also enjoyed his rich baritone in many solos. He has a huge range.

The range of things Brian does for the Chorale extends far beyond music. He has taken the many duties of the presidency in stride. He also does a lot of the Chorale's public relations. He designed and maintains the Chorale's website, and he makes beautiful posters for concerts.

Brian's day job is teaching theology, ethics, world religion, and European history at St. John's Jesuit High School. Next year, he'll start teaching computer science (!) there as well.

Brian's interest in computers started in 2012 when he and some colleagues attended a conference on technology in the classroom and decided to form a company to teach technology to other educators. Their business needed a website, so Brian learned how to create one. He didn't know programming back then, so he taught himself and eventually learned enough to make two computer games which are available

at the Apple app store, Letterby and Puzzleby.

Originally from the Cleveland area, Brian first came to Toledo to study at UT, where he majored in interdisciplinary humanities, sang in the men's choir and concert chorale, and played trombone in the jazz band. It was there that he met his future wife, Beth. When he graduated, they were married and he joined her in Columbus, where she was studying veterinary medicine. He worked as campus minister for a Methodist church. While he enjoyed pastoral work, he missed academics.

In 2004, Brian was offered a research assistantship at the University of Toledo, and he earned a Masters degree in philosophy. As part of his assistantship, he taught world religions and

introductory courses in religion and philosophy. After earning his Masters, he continued teaching at UT for a number of years. In 2012, his students nominated him for an Excellence in Teaching Award, which he won.

After his graduate studies, Brian was invited to teach at St. John's Jesuit. His work there allows him to combine academics with pastoral work. A Catholic himself, he directs retreats where the boys learn about spirituality and prayer. He helps "kids see where God is calling them in their lives," he says. "It's a kind of ministry."

In addition to teaching at St. John's, Brian has some other jobs: teaching medical ethics at Mercy College, teaching theology and computer science at Arrupe Virtual Learning Institute, and managing Arrupe Virtual's course site.

And of course, he's also a husband and a dad. He and Beth have two children, Becca, 11, and Ben, the Chorale's newest intern, 14. Brian speaks with obvious pride about his son's ability to handle the challenge of singing with the Chorale. "He's an excellent musician," he says, "He tells me when I'm off pitch!" Brian started singing with Masterworks Chorale when Ben was a year old. "It truly is a gift that I get to share this experience with him now," he says.

The family lives in a house full of furniture that Brian, an amateur woodworker, built himself. He also built a sizable addition on this house, with the help of friends and family. "I enjoy making things," he says.

Yes, this baritenor's range is breathtaking. How fortunate we of the Chorale are to have such a remarkable person among us!

— Tom Sheehan, Tenor

### ben tittl: tenor intern a musical life

Music has been part of Ben Tittl's life as long as he can remember. Ben is the son of Tenor Brian Tittl and the Chorale's newest intern. "I was introduced to music at about 18 months of age at Kindermusik with Cheryl Freeman. It was just a bunch of little kids getting together and singing, but it started my love of music," he says.

Ben, who is in 8th grade at Lial Catholic School, has been taking piano lessons since age seven, most recently with well known jazz pianist Sy Winnie. He joined the Children's Choir of Northwest Ohio in third grade and continued until recently. After finishing with the children's choir, Ben was happy to have the opportunity to join the Chorale as an intern.

At school, Ben participates in the quiz bowl and robotics teams. He has been in multiple musicals over the years, most recently in *Newsies* at St. John's Jesuit High School.

Ben enjoys a broad spectrum of music, but mostly enjoys playing music from movies and video games on the piano. Music by Koji Kondo, the composer of many famous video game themes, has been a great influence on him.

Ben also enjoys rock and pop music of the 80s and 90s. Most recently, he's been interested in Queen. He says, "I have always been drawn to music. I played piano before I sang, but once I started playing pop songs, I had to sing."

— Tim Langhorst, Bass

Read more about the Chorale's intern program at [www.masterworkstoledo.com](http://www.masterworkstoledo.com).

Use the link below to jump into musical flora and fauna. Enjoy an eclectic mix of jazz, world, and popular music, along with selections from Saint-Saëns's *The Carnival of the Animals*. The list is curated by

Bass Tim Langhorst.

<https://tinyurl.com/MWCPlaylistSpr2019>

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://www.spotify.com).

**one singer's spotify  
playlist  
inspired by the theme  
of our collage concert  
"flora & fauna"**

MWC 2019  
Flora & Fauna

*The Canary  
The song of canaries  
Never varies,  
And when they're moulting  
They're pretty revolting.*

*The Chorale will sing Eric  
Whitacre's settings of short,  
funny verses by Ogden Nash  
about six different animals*







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# Masterworks Chorale

connecting lives through choral music



## Go Ahead! Slit the Seal! Here's What's Inside!

A preview of our June 2 Collage Concert *Flora & Fauna* • Profiles of Chorale President Brian Tittl and his son, Intern Ben • The latest Singer's Choice playlist on Spotify • Artistic Director Tim Cloeter's wonderful tribute to his mentor, in which he discusses three deeply significant truths about the art of choral conducting

### Mark Your Calendar and Join Us!

**Radio Broadcast of our Classics Concert**  
Thursday, May 30, 2019 at 8 p.m.  
WGTE-FM, 91.3

Our Collage Concert  
**Flora & Fauna**  
Sunday, June 2, 2019 at 3 p.m.  
Franciscan Center at Lourdes University,  
Sylvania

*New day &  
location!*

**Radio Broadcast of our Collage Concert**  
Thursday, July 18, 2019 at 8 p.m.  
WGTE-FM, 91.3

**Contact the Chorale**  
PO Box 114, Toledo, OH 43697  
(419) 742-2775  
masterworkstoledo@gmail.com

### This May Be Your Year to Audition for Masterworks Chorale!

Adult Singers: Have you always wanted to sing with Masterworks Chorale? Why not now? We are hoping to add singers in all voice parts. See below for audition information.

High-School Singers: We hope to have as many as four interns—in any voice combination—rehearse and perform with the Chorale for each of our three concerts.

To make an appointment for an audition, fill in the form at [www.masterworkstoledo.com/audition.html](http://www.masterworkstoledo.com/audition.html). Questions? Leave a message at (419) 742-2775.

### Tickets and Other Details

Ticket prices for our Collage Concert: Closer up: \$25, Farther back: \$20, Students: \$12. All seating is reserved. Order by phone at (419) 242-2787 or or [click here](#) to go to the Valentine Theatre ticket office, even though the Collage Concert will be at Lourdes University's Franciscan Center.

### Disabilities

If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please advise the Chorale's business office at (419) 742-2775 at least two weeks before the concert. For TYY/TDD use Ohio Relay Service 1 (800) 750-0750.



Masterworks Chorale of Toledo

[www.masterworkstoledo.com](http://www.masterworkstoledo.com)