

A photograph of three people singing. On the left, a man in a suit and glasses is singing. In the center, a woman with short brown hair is singing. On the right, another man in a suit is singing. The word "hear" is written in a cursive font above "the", and "Voices" is written in a large, bold, cursive font below "the".

# hear the Voices

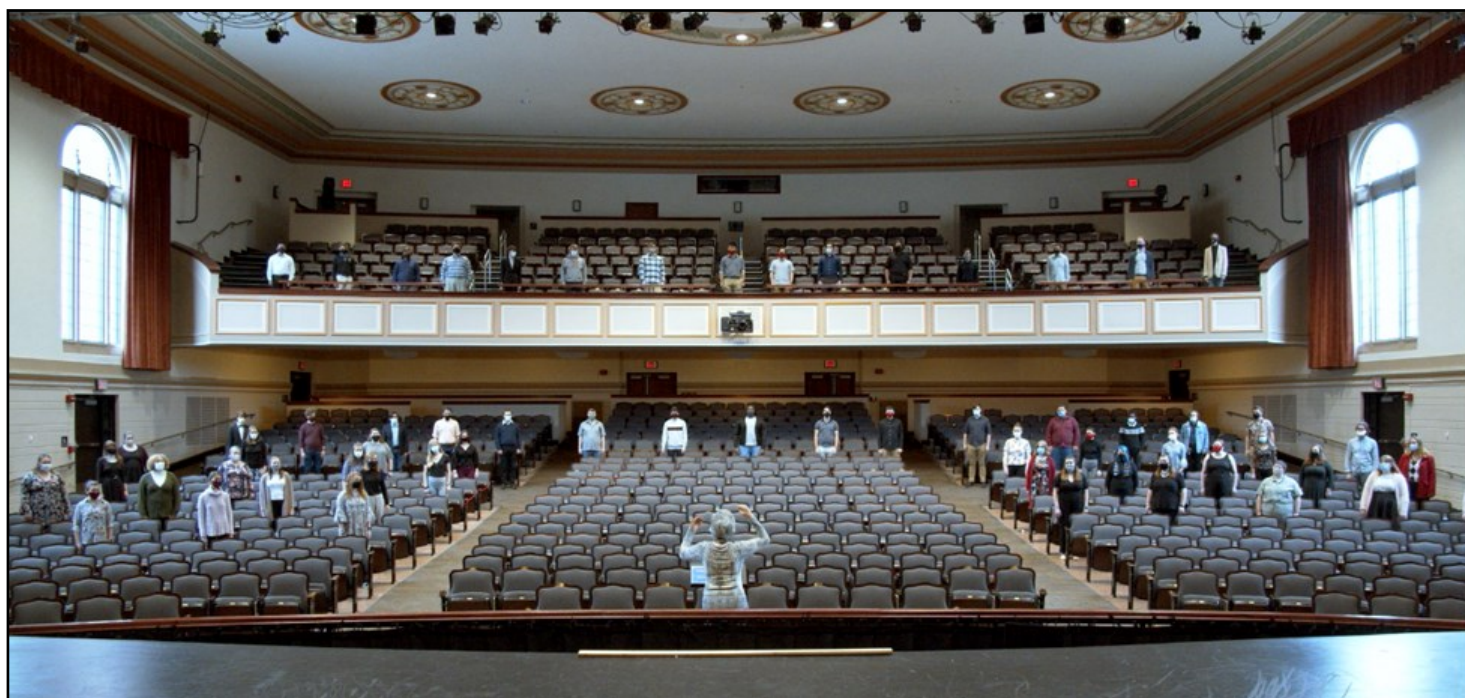
A Newsletter for Friends of Choral Music at Mansfield University

Peggy Dettwiler, Director of Choral Activities  
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## Editorial

The image at the bottom of the page says it all, doesn't it? The Mansfield University Concert Choir rehearsing in Straughn Auditorium, wearing masks and keeping a distance from each other. Madame Conductor is trying to keep the choral flame alive and still follow protocols for singers during the pandemic. Musicians are creative people, and they can cope with some adversity. Rehearsing under tight regulations (30 minutes before allowing the room to air out, sectionals rather than the whole group) are not the ideal conditions under which to operate. And yet, the Mansfield choral ensembles pulled it off and produced a respectable virtual concert, "With Liberty and Justice for All" (alluding to the last words of the "Pledge of Allegiance") that, with the help of Houston Baker and Mark Polonia, was recorded in October, streamed at the end of November, and is now available on DVD through Soundwaves. (See announcement later in the issue.)

Hidden from the relative success in keeping ensembles alive is the hard work of faculty, administration, staff, and students to adjust to the new circumstances. To bring it off during the pandemic it took immeasurably more time and patience, and a surplus of collaborative spirit than needed in regular semesters. Sara Herbst, the secretary of the music department, skillfully navigated the challenges to room reservations without making ensemble directors collide. And, I am sure, President Charles E. Patterson and his cabinet, especially Jim Welch, did their part in gathering the resources and establishing the protocols to keep the campus open. Unlike Notre Dame, University of Carolina at Chapel Hill, and recently Duke University—there was no campus-wide lockdown for Mansfield University. A resounding Bravo is in order to all folks contributing to the success!



Rehearsing under restrictions was not all that bad for the choral ensembles. Standing six feet apart forced individuals to know their parts; in other words, they could not “lean” on each other for support. And I remember very well the terror that struck me when I was singing in the Festival Chorus and Madame Conductor decided that it was time for “mixed formation,” meaning that I did not have my fellow bassists to the right and left (or behind and in front) of me, but encountered folks next to me singing parts completely different from mine. It was a humbling experience, but one of the tricks from the pedagogical tool kits of choral conductors to ensure quality. There are other measures to ascertain that a “highly-select ensemble” like the Concert Choir remains in the top-league of choirs, nationally and internationally.

As editor of the newsletter for the friends of choral music at Mansfield University, I have tried to keep the choral flame alive by producing not just two but four issues per annum in 2020 (January, May, August, and November). One of them focusing on the convention of the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Region that had just taken place in Rochester, NY in early March (only a few days before the lockdown shut down much of the country and academic life and teaching changed from the way we knew it), two issues dealing with the history of the Concert Choir and the Festival Chorus by way of photo essays. It was fun to delve into memories and rummage through old pictures and formulate something that would ring a bell with others: faculty, students, alums, and friends. The issue at hand was supposed to continue in this vein with a centerfold story heralding another of the University’s vocal ensembles: the Mansfieldians directed by Sheryl Monkeliën. But she kindly agreed to postpone her well-deserved stroll in memory lane and relinquish that space to Professor Youngsuk Kim, who, after teaching for more than thirty years at Mansfield University, decided to retire at the end of the 2020/21 academic year. Needless to say the vocal/choral area will miss him, his devotion to students, the pedagogical skills he mustered as a superb teacher of singing, as well as his wisdom and council in matters of art and life expressed always with circumspection and respect for other opinions. (See centerfold story.)

Yes, life goes on in difficult times. A year ago, we did not know that the pandemic would last this long, but now we have reason to say that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel (even though the tunnel still seems to be quite long before we have traversed it to its end).

I cannot help but insert some choral music at this juncture: The piece is called *Sogno di volare*, and I got to know it by way of Hingrid Kujawinski (originally from Brazil, MA from Mansfield University 2014), who is a choral director at the University of Southern Chile in Valdivia. Since the country was in severe lockdown for several months, she decided to conduct her choral ensembles across the equator from Florida. Well versed in technology, she came up with a virtual concert, the individual voices mixed in a respectable blend and the video enhanced by starlit skies, galaxies, and little human figures running telescopes. It was quite an homage to Leonardo da Vinci, a Renaissance man if there ever was one! (He not only was a painter of the Mona Lisa, now hanging in the Louvre enchanting visitors with her enigmatic smile, or the Last Supper, rotting away in a cathedral in Milan the last time I saw it, but also inventing flying machines and writing a poem about the dream of flying—indeed “*Sogno di volare*.”)

I found several performances of the setting by the Chinese composer Christopher Tin, an earworm and utterly derivative in its style, but, at times, surprisingly uplifting even for a connoisseur like me. Kujawinski’s performance with her virtual ensemble is the first listed (it has the text in both Italian and Spanish, at the bottom and top, respectively); the second and glitziest performance functions as introductory music to a TV Civilization series (with an English translation of the Italian text, perhaps the best entry point for the linguistically-challenged); the third is a rendition, conducted by the composer himself, at the Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales, in the same tent where Mansfield University’s choral ensembles performed in 2011. (The piece is only five minutes in length, but worth that amount of attention—times three!)

[https://youtu.be/4\\_4NpsHkMTk](https://youtu.be/4_4NpsHkMTk)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQYN2P3E06s&vl=en>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAYtziCJvr0>

Madame Conductor has plans not only for the weeks ahead (see Choral Calendar), but also for the months and years ahead—plans for concerts, travel, competitions, appearances in NYC, etc. (But it is best to let her talk directly to you in the Choral Cues following.)

Jürgen Thym

Life in the choral world during a Pandemic remains challenging, but we choral directors have all learned ways to circumvent the circumstances! And some of our new approaches will remain in our arsenal even after we return to a more normal singing routine. We have all accepted (for the time being) the benefits and deficiencies of zoom and video recordings to share our art form.

# Choral Cues ...

by Peggy Dettwiler



For example, since January, I have been able to connect musically with some pretty amazing people and choral ensembles in the US and abroad:

- In January, six Mansfield University students and I gave a warm-up and words of encouragement to the Barnsley Youth Choir and their director, Mat Wright. This choir was hosting an all-night Singathon to raise money for their program. We checked in at 8:00 pm Eastern Time, when it was 1:00 am in England, their time. Still, 141 young people were on that zoom meeting! And they raised over \$22,000!
- In March, I gave two one-hour vocal workshops for the first-altos in the Illinois All-State High School Chorus. Recordings of the Mansfield University Concert Choir warming-up and demonstrating vocal colors added to the presentations. And videos of the MUCC from the Fall semester of our Bruckner, *Os Justi*, and the Spiritual, *Joshua*, were seen in the Marble Collegiate Church in NYC and via the Pennsylvania Music Educators celebration of Music In Our Schools Month (MIOSM).
- In April the same state association, PMEA, will hold their virtual state music conference and the presentation we recorded this week, *The Choral Rehearsal: Process to Product*, will be shown on Saturday morning, April 17.
- On April 22, 8 pm, I will give a PowerPoint presentation on *Concert Programming: Like Planning a Full-Course Meal* for the Eastern Region Virtual Conference of the National Association for Music Educators (NAfME).

All of these efforts are intended to keep choral music at Mansfield University in the minds and hearts of our singers and those who follow the program. I have been very grateful that we in the Music Department at Mansfield University have been able to work directly with our students in a face-to-face music-making environment. Spacing, masks, and limited-timed rehearsals in large spaces seem to be small prices to pay for live singing experiences!

Starting next week, we will begin recording three spring concerts to be presented through our Music Department YouTube channel. I cannot thank Mark Polonia and Houston Baker enough for their talent and expertise to make these recordings at a professional level!

The Festival Chorus concert scheduled to air on April 18 at 2:30 pm. will focus on music celebrating St. Cecilia, the patroness of music. This will feature three movements from Handel's *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* and a powerful chorus by Joseph Martin, *The Awakening*.

*Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*.....George F. Handel  
From Harmony  
The Trumpet's Loud Clangour  
The Dead Shall Live  
*The Awakening*.....Joseph M. Martin

This concert will be dedicated to Celia Finestone, a long-time supporter of the Festival Chorus and other music organizations in the area, who passed away in September. Celia is a nickname for Cecilia! We will also support the Wellsboro Deane Center initiative to create a Music Park in her memory.

The 20-voice Chamber Singers will revive their program to have been given last spring on stars entitled: *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. This presentation is on track for April 24 at 7:30 pm. We are excited that it will feature many video graphics of stars and galaxies!

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.....Daniel Elder  
 Sure on This Shining Night.....Samuel Barber  
 Lightly Stepped a Yellow Star.....Dan Forres  
 Hence Stars, Too Dim of Light.....Michael East  
 Choose Something Like a Star.....Randall Thompson  
 When You Wish Upon a Star.....arr. Nancy Wertsch

Our final concert in the semester, to stream on Saturday, May 1 at 7:30 pm., will feature choral music prepared by the Concert Choir and the Mansfieldians originally scheduled for their participation in the World Choir Games in Belgium. Sadly, those games were postponed and thus, the tour, will be delayed for one more year. My heart breaks for the seniors who will not have the experience of any international concert tour during their collegiate years. Since 1996, singers in the MU Concert Choir have had at least one opportunity to travel to Europe and perform.

This final choral concert of the academic year is dedicated to the memory of Howard J. Smith, long-time supporter of the choral program. Howard and his wife, Olynda, joined the Concert Choir on six of our European tours!

Still, we are making the best of the situation and you won't want to miss their pre-recorded concert! Both groups sound fabulous! Among the selections will be:

Haec dies.....William Byrd  
 Sleep.....Eric Whitacre  
 Sinner Man.....arr. Howard Roberts  
 Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen.....arr. Gail B. Poch  
 Soon I Will Be Done.....arr. Stacey V. Gibbs  
 Born to Die.....Glenn Burleigh  
 How Can I Keep from Singing.....arr. Ronald Staheli

Please mark your calendars and join us on YouTube through the Mansfield University Music channel!

Since the Concert Choir has worked so hard to prepare music for competition, I found two virtual competitions taking place this summer that we can enter with recordings made in April. The first is the Rovdo International Choral Competition held May 14 to 16 in Minsk, Belarus. We will enter Category F: Sacred Music, with our recordings of *Os Justi* and *Born to Die*. There is also a Spirituals and Gospel Songs Category, where we can present our set of spirituals. The second competition is the Musica Orbis Prague Festival held online on June 19 & 20. We will enter two categories for Adult Choirs. It is wonderful to receive feedback on our choral music-making from adjudicators in other countries. Wish us luck!!

## Choral Calendar

April 9-11, 7:30 pm	Monty Python's "Spamalot"*
April 15-17	PMEA State Conference Virtual (Interest session)
April 18, 2:30 pm	Festival Chorus: "Let Music Live"
April 24, 7:30 pm	Chamber Singers: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"
May 1, 7:30 pm	Concert Choir & Mansfieldians Concert

*Note: All the events in the spring are virtual. Details will be announced through the usual channels (local newspapers, email postings, etc.). Last-minute information can be obtained by calling the music department at Mansfield University: 570-662-4710. The April 18 concert is dedicated to the memory of Celia Finestone (who was a member of the Festival Chorus for a number of years), the May 1 concert is dedicated to the memory of Howard J. Smith (see obituary and a tribute later in the issue).*

\*Tickets for the MU Production of SPAMALOT can be purchased through [www.mansfield.booktix.com](http://www.mansfield.booktix.com)



## Another Choral Cue: Two New Purposes for ACDA

On the surface, two new purposes may not be a newsworthy item. But: they were added to the constitution of the American Choral Directors Association (or ACDA)—the first time it was amended since 1975 (46 years ago)—and the mover and shaker behind the additions was none other than Mansfield University’s Director of Choral Activities, setting things in motion while she was President of the ACDA’s Eastern Region during the years 2018-20. A big deal, in other words, submitted for a national vote and passed, just a few months ago, with an overwhelming majority of the members of the Association.

The new purposes, which will now be added to the present 12 ACDA Purposes, are as follows:

*13. To foster and promote choral singing in the pursuit of peace and justice that enhances social and emotional well-being.*

*14. To foster and promote diversity and inclusivity through active engagement with underrepresented choral musicians and potential choral participants.*

### The Purposes of ACDA

(#11-#12 were added in 1975; the first ten were established in 1959)

1. To foster and promote choral singing, which will provide artistic, cultural, and spiritual experiences for the participants.
2. To foster and promote the finest types of choral music to make these experiences possible.
3. To foster and encourage rehearsal procedures conducive to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and artistic performance.
4. To foster and promote the organization and development of choral groups of all types in schools and colleges.
5. To foster and promote the development of choral music in the church and synagogue.
6. To foster and promote the organization and development of choral societies in cities and communities.
7. To foster and promote understanding of choral music as an important medium of contemporary artistic expression.
8. To foster and promote significant research in the field of choral music.
9. To foster and encourage choral composition of superior quality.
10. To cooperate with all organizations dedicated to the development of musical culture in America
11. To foster and promote international exchange programs involving performing groups, conductors, and composers
12. To disseminate professional news and information about choral music

## And a Third Choral Cue: Eric Whitacre

*Eric Whitacre, perhaps the most prominent composer of choral music today, spoke at the National Conference of ACDA, originally to be held in Dallas, TX, in March 2021. Only the dates were on the mark, the location was virtual. Your chronicler heard his engaging speech a few days later and immediately decided to jot down its most poignant messages.*

Whitacre remembered the time, 30 years ago, when he attended the national conference of ACDA in Phoenix, AZ, and it was a life-changing experience for him. He heard choirs and choral sounds there, was impressed by the passion and excitement he encountered there. It defined him as a composer for years to come.

Yes, he admits having been the instigator of virtual choirs more than a decade ago, generating community and purpose across borders, races, ethnicities as well as rallying singers on a global scale behind a common goal. He seemed to almost regret being the founder of virtual choirs. Now they are heralded as a safer way to perform, safer than real ones. Our traditional way of making music, he said, is considered dangerous, can even lead to death. He insists that the idea of virtual choirs being the path to the future is wrong.

Real choirs are what we are about. They are the core of our existence. They can never replace a virtual choir. We need to rekindle the choral flame.

And he undergirded his point of view with his experience as a parent with a child doing distance learning. Let’s not get sucked into a black hole called virtual learning, he said. Our teachers right now are handcuffed, and they are performing a heroic task in coping with an emergency, but they are looking forward (and so do the kids they are teaching) to having real classes again.

When the pandemic is over, he envisions a new golden age of choral music, inspired by the knowledge of what has been missed during years when live music was silenced.

## Letter to European Travelers by Peggy Dettwiler

I need to share with you some disappointing news. I learned that the World Choir Games have been postponed to October 30-November 7 this year. Obviously, they now take place in the middle of the semester, and we won't be able to participate. I am sure you have been waiting and wondering about the viability of the tour this coming July given the world situation as a result of the Pandemic. I had actually been somewhat hopeful to travel given the progress with vaccinations in the USA. But Europe has not kept pace, and travel there is simply not possible in the coming months.

Encore Tours is very accommodating again, allowing us to move the tour to the summer of 2022 without financial loss. There are several choral festivals/competitions during that time which we can consider.

I feel particularly sad for the senior class of choir members as they will be the first class since 1996 not to experience an international tour!

I hope that you remain interested in joining us next summer. Please be patient as we contemplate the options for tour destinations. Feel free to let me know if you wish to drop out, and I will give you details to connect with Jon Linker of Encore Tours regarding the process.

MANSFIELD UNIVERSITY  
PRESENTS

**MONTY PYTHON'S  
SPAMALOT**  
Socially Distant Concert-ish Version  
for Plagues and Pandemics

A musical lovingly ripped off from the motion picture "Monty Python and the Holy Grail"

**Streaming Dates**  
April 9th 7:30  
10th 7:30  
11th 7:30

go to [mansfield.booktix.com](http://mansfield.booktix.com)

The MU Production of *Monty Python's SPAMALOT* will be streamed on April 9, 10, and 11, 2021 at 7:30pm. It has been a challenging year trying to rehearse and prepare all it takes to produce a show while maintaining all safety precautions due to Covid-19. The students have been troopers and have been very flexible. Many of the things we have to do for safety such as masks, social distancing, and not touching each other have been written into the show. These all have been given the traditional Monty Python brand of humor. The show is very funny and the cast and crew have needed funny this year.

The cast members include Matthew Merolla (junior, performance) as King Arthur; Eric Craig-Peysson (sophomore, music business) as Patsy; Natalie Holsey (junior, music education) as The Lady of the Lake; Seth Shields (junior, music education) as Lancelot; Jay Falgo (junior, music education/performance) as Robin; Ben Eisenhour (senior, BA) as Galahad; Theron Zajchowski (junior, music business) as Bevedere; and John Tobey (senior, performance) as Herbert.

The show streams at the specified times only and tickets can be purchased for \$15 in advance. Order your streaming tickets at [www.mansfield.booktix.com](http://www.mansfield.booktix.com)

*There may be a few surprise guests participating in this show . . . . . you will recognize them!*



Howard Smith, the good shepherd, with his Suffolks



Howard Smith receiving the Presidential medal from MU's president, Francis Hendricks, in 2016

## Howard J. Smith (1928-2020)

*Howard J. Smith Jr., 92, of West Burlington, passed away on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020 at the Robert Packer Hospital. He was the loving husband of Olynda A. (Chaffee) Smith, a 1957 Mansfield graduate. Howard served five terms, a total of 30 years, on the Mansfield University Council of Trustees before retiring from the board in 2013. - Howard and his wife were longtime supporters of Mansfield, with a particular interest in the music program, having made six trips to Europe with various ensembles. They created the Howard and Olynda Chaffee ('57) Smith Endowed Music Fund, which is used to help with travel costs of choral groups and provide scholarship assistance to vocal students. - In addition to his commitment to Mansfield University, he served his community and region in a variety of capacities, including the military, retiring at the rank of Major in the U.S. Army Reserve.*

*The following tribute was written by Music Professor and Choral Director, Dr. Peggy Dettwiler.*

### **“Personal Discipline”—In Memory of Howard J. Smith, Jr.**

In 2011, Howard and Olynda Smith signed the European Concert Choir Tour Journal with these words to the students: “...again, we are at a loss for adequate expression of our pleasure in the trip and more importantly, our pleasure and pride in the members of the choir. That pride speaks not only of your accomplishments on the stage, but your conduct in your daily routines. The personal discipline that has brought you success at this point in your lives is the greatest guarantee of success in your future endeavors, in whatever field that may be.”

The words that jump out in this statement are “personal discipline.” This is a perfect description of Howard Smith’s life, one filled with service to his community, state, and country. His obituary describes a long list of boards, councils, clubs, foundations, church activities, and military service to which he was committed. Not to mention his love for raising Suffolk sheep, something that was evident as we traveled in 2011 in Ireland and Wales, where the number of sheep are greater than the number of human residents!

Howard spent 30 years as a member of the Mansfield University Council of Trustees, serving 12 years as a member of the executive board of the state association of trustees of PASSHE and two years as president of that group. Howard was awarded the Eberle Award of Volunteerism in 2000. To accomplish these many hours of service clearly took enormous personal discipline.

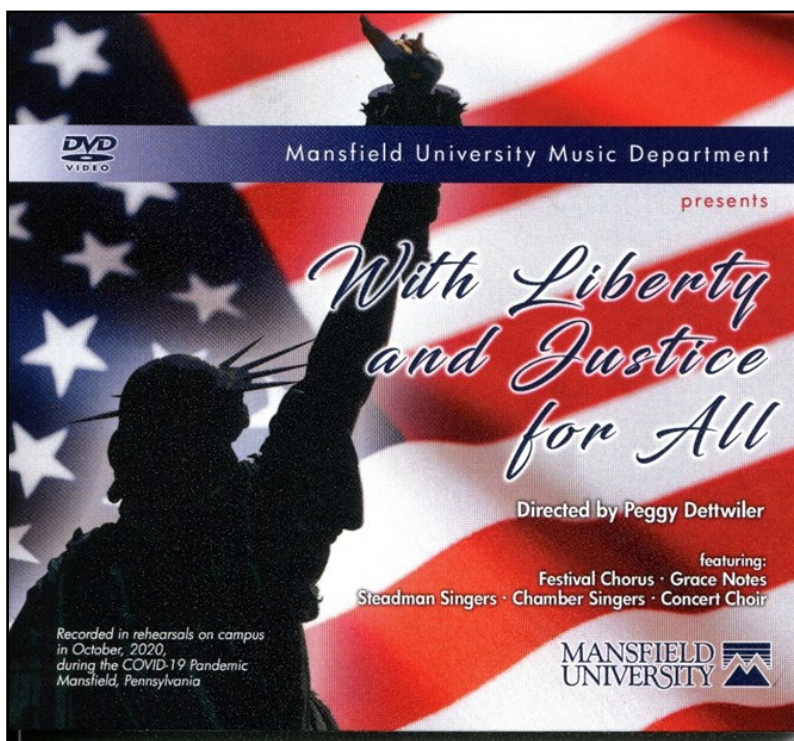
His life partner of 61 years, Olynda Chaffee Smith graduated from Mansfield University in 1957 and set out on her 35-year career as a music teacher. Their mutual love of music made them followers of the music program at MU and provided the stimulus to join the Concert Choir on six of their European Tours. Together, they traveled to 14 countries with us. About 15 years ago, they established the Howard and Olynda Chaffee ('57) Smith Endowed Music Fund to help with travel costs of choral groups and/or provide scholarship assistance to vocal students.

The “personal discipline” that embodied Howard included a warm and genuine honesty of spirit. His remarkable life and generosity are to be celebrated.

Thus, the 2021 spring concert of the Mansfield University Concert Choir will be dedicated to Howard J. Smith, in loving memory.



## New DVD featuring Mansfield University's Choral Ensembles



Despite severe restrictions for rehearsals, public gatherings, and music making, the choral ensembles under the direction of Peggy Dettwiler produced a DVD of a concert rehearsed and recorded in segments during the fall semester. The concert takes its motto from the last words of the *Pledge of Allegiance*, “With Liberty and Justice for All,” and features works commenting on current political and social issues: Women’s Rights, Immigration, and Black Lives Matter. Instrumental in recording the various numbers and gathering them into a coherent video were Houston Baker and Mark Polonia. The DVD is available through Soundwaves Recording in Huron, Ohio (soundwaves.org or 419.433.4918) or during intermission whenever choral ensembles give live concerts again with audiences in Steadman Theatre. For those who would like a copy earlier, call 570.662.4721.

## NEWS FROM ALUMNI

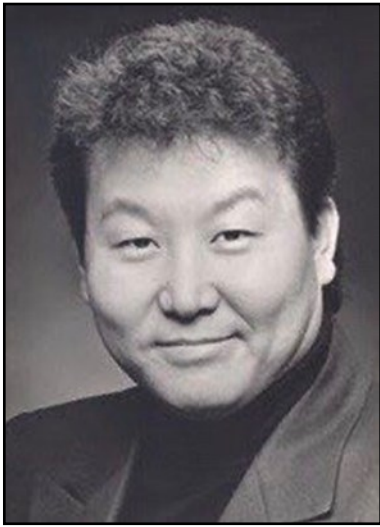
**Kellie Barbato** (class of 2009), Music Librarian, Columbia, SC, writes: “Thanks so much for the wonderful newsletter in the mail with the note of congratulations. 2020 was a challenging year for me (though I know I’m not alone in that), but I somehow managed to continue the upward trajectory of my librarianship career despite the setback of being laid off in May. I’m so grateful! Perhaps I can one day return to the campus of MU and work at North Hall Library. I watch for postings! I applied for a position at Lycoming College over the summer, and they temporarily closed the search this past fall due to COVID. -- I am praying for the virus to get under control so that all of my music teacher and musician friends can return to making music normally - I suffer with you in solidarity.”

**Felicia Barber** (MM at MU, 1999) gave an interest session at the ACDA National Virtual Convention in mid-March: “Inherent Biases Found in the Choral Music Education Curriculum.” (See also page 17 in this issue.)

## FACULTY NEWS

Rather than having individual faculty members in the vocal/choral area report on their adventures as teachers of singing, choral conductors, and music educators, *HTV*'s editor, this time (and perhaps only this time) prefers to sum up what he perceived in the last six or seven months. First and foremost, it is amazing how much got done despite the pandemic that wreaked havoc on academic programs, cultural life, and teaching throughout the country. Most of the successes of Mansfield's vocal/choral area are described in this issue: in the Choral Cues and the captions accompanying the performance of Nicolai's *Merry Wives of Windsor*. And the centerfold story celebrates a colleague of more than thirty years. Perhaps the most impressive item is the feature on how well Mansfield's students did in various NATS competitions on the chapter and regional levels. The success of the students also reflects well on the faculty teaching them. Hidden from *HTV* is the amount of work that Mansfield faculty, some of them in the vocal/choral area, put into discussions (always virtual) with their colleagues at Bloomsburg and Lock Haven preparing the integration of three Pennsylvania State System campuses. Yes, there were setbacks: sabbaticals had to be postponed and European choir travel could not take place. But the disappointments are temporary. The vocal/choral area will come back strengthened by the experiences it has gone through during the last year. A resounding Bravo is in order for all those contributing their time, wisdom, and spirit to make this happen! Or, as the French say, Chapeau!





## YOUNGSUK KIM

*Professor Youngsuk Kim, on the voice faculty at Mansfield University since 1988, recently decided to retire at the end of the academic year 2020/21. The department will lose a superb musician, a resourceful teacher of voice, and a fine conductor. It is appropriate that Hear the Voices devotes this issue's centerfold story to Dr. Kim. On a sunny afternoon in the middle of March, Youngsuk Kim sat down with the editor of the newsletter to converse about his background, his life in South Korea and in the United States, the highpoints of his professional career, and the prospects in the next chapter of his life.*

When Professor Kim was eligible (and approved) for a sabbatical year to recharge his batteries outside of Mansfield, his class of students surprised him with a cake and well-wishes pasted in green colors onto the cake. How can you lose weight with an adoration expressed in such a fashion?



Youngsuk Kim (김영석) was born in Busan (Pusan), South Korea, a bustling port city on the southeast coast of the Korean peninsula. Early on, he discovered that music might be his calling and, after finishing high school, he studied voice at Seoul National University, the premier academic institution in the country's capital, earning the equivalent of a Bachelor of Music degree. Rather than continuing his musical studies, he had to serve in the South Korean army for three years (the length of the draft for young men in a country still technically at war with its Northern neighbor). He was stationed in the eastern mountain region of the DMZ or Demilitarized Zone, one of the hotspots of the Cold War (perhaps only comparable to West Berlin before the Wall came down in 1989); one of the assignments of his unit was to discover underground activities in the area, as North Koreans were prone to build tunnels across the border to smuggle agents or military deployments into the southern part of the country. Fortunately, Kim never encountered military skirmishes during those years.

When his military service was over in 1980, Kim picked up his musical education again. He passed a national exam in music, English, and history that allowed him to continue his studies abroad. He applied to and was accepted by the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he earned a Master of Music degree in 1983. Having set his sights even higher, he enrolled with a full scholarship as a doctoral student at the University of Miami. "Boston was too cold for me," he confided, "I wanted to be where it was warm." Florida provided an additional lure for the aspiring musician: watching dolphins and scuba diving. (It may come as a surprise that Kim is, or was, a licensed scuba diver!) Dolphins and diving did not prevent him from advancing in matters musical: A Doctor of Musical Arts was bestowed on him in 1987.

Here it is perhaps necessary to catch up with family matters. While still in Korea, Kim met Kyungsook Cho (조경숙), a student of medicine and pharmacology. They got married: a son Francis was born in Boston, a daughter Genevieve followed in Miami. Cho received her M.D. from Ewha University in Seoul, an academic institution founded by American Methodist missionaries, and added a Ph. D in pharmacology from the University of Miami to her résumé as well as some postdoctoral work at Cornell University. Subsequently, she was offered a professorship at Ewha University. But by that time the children had grown up with English as their native language, causing difficulties with their schooling in Korea, and it was decided to reconstitute the family in the United States. Cho became a doctor at Cooper University Hospital in New Jersey, Kim joined the music faculty at Mansfield University in 1988. That arrangement enabled the couple to retain a two-career marriage and a semblance of family life; it certainly was preferable to lengthy intercontinental flights crossing the Pacific Ocean (which, depending on the winds, could be anywhere between 15 and 18 hours with refueling stops, if needed, in Alaska). Not to mention the cost of travelling by air.

Kim is a person who, most of his life, lived in big metropolitan areas: Busan, Seoul, Boston, and Miami. A small town in Pennsylvania did not seem a permanent solution. Kim admits that he initially thought of Mansfield University as a three-year job before moving on. But the small town and the university exerted a certain lure. He felt welcome, he encountered “really nice people,” and the University supported him in becoming a “resident alien,” i.e., qualifying for a Green Card. (Meanwhile, he and his wife have become American citizens.) In addition, he noticed that Mansfield, PA was not in the middle of nowhere, as the saying goes, but in the middle of everywhere—in easy driving distance to the cultural and urban centers of the Northeast: four hours to the George Washington Bridge before getting into New York City, four hours to Philadelphia’s Colonial District or Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, and five hours to Washington, DC. “There was a time when I had twenty recitals per year in cities of the Northeast. I would not have been able to keep up with a demanding concertizing schedule had I been stationed in Idaho or Wyoming.” Mansfield, thus, grew on him. A believer in life-long learning, he was also able to have private lessons with teachers of singing in the Northeast and take conducting lessons at Westminster Choir College, just a half-hour drive from Philadelphia.

“Mansfield allowed me to become fulfilled as a musician,” Kim summed it up. He had great students in his studio, some of whom have gone on to become professional singers. He is as proud of them as he is of those who have become music educators to teach at colleges, high schools, elementary schools, and community music schools to provide instruction for the next generation of musicians. One of them, a pretty good singer, he admits with a smile, has become a pastor in a Presbyterian Church. (And he added, with another smile: “I hope he insists on a good choral program in his church.”) He has also been fortunate to collaborate with Michael Crum and Todd Ranney in producing works for the musical theatre (musicals and operas). One of the productions, *Forever Plaid*, even was shown in Kim’s native South Korea with Mansfield students in the lead roles. And, yes, Peggy Dettwiler also needs to be mentioned in this regard. He was the soloist in various concerts with the Festival Chorus:



Photo opportunity for the pit orchestra, celebrating its performance after a night at the opera in Straughn Auditorium. Kim, the conductor, is there as well as many instrumentalists, overshadowed by the guy with white hair hugging his double bass: Jeff Jacobson.



Handel's *Messiah*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Haydn's *The Creation*, and, more recently, Honegger's *King David*. Early in his tenure at Mansfield, he even conducted a show choir called the Mansfieldians. "When Jack Wilcox retired," he explained, "the job fell on me to continue the tradition, as the youngest on the faculty: I had no choice, I took a summer course on show choirs in New Jersey and just did it." A show choir does no longer exist at Mansfield, but the name "Mansfieldians" is now carried by the vocal jazz group directed by Sheryl Monkeliën.

In spite of being firmly tied to Mansfield and the US-Northeast, South Korea still beckoned as a performing venue for Kim. (Besides, he had family there: his parents, when they were still alive, expected their son to return once in a while, and a brother and his family lived there as well.) Every year during his more than 30 years at Mansfield, he ventured across the Pacific Ocean to perform recitals or sing in, produce, or conduct operas. The editor of *HTV* has in his collection a DVD of a wonderful production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at Seoul National University (see picture with Kim posing in front of a poster in Seoul, Korea). The arts scene in that relatively young country, especially after trading a military dictatorship for democracy in the 1980s, has been inspiring, and Kim must have felt at home there in more than one way.

At this moment, it may be appropriate to confess that your *HTV* editor had a voice lesson, perhaps fifteen years ago—the first lesson since 1967 when he studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin—and it was with Kim in his Mansfield studio. (He flattered me by saying: "You have a voice!") What I learned then (and also by observing him in recitals) was that breath support was his mantra and key to success as a teacher of singing. "Breath is essential in singing," he confided, "but my teachers did not know how to teach an aspect they recognized as important." Kim found an answer by studying with Jin Hee Moon, a yoga instructor at Rutgers University in New Jersey (again, close to Philadelphia), with expertise in Indian philosophy and meditation techniques. She opened up avenues for breathing and teaching voice that he has put into practice in his Mansfield University studio. "Breathing properly can even help with stage fright," he added.

And there is another trick of the trade connected to breathing: At any pharmacy store in the US, you can acquire a Neti Pot, a gadget with which you can cleanse your sinuses (and I learned about it from Kim many years ago). That kind of cleansing is part of his daily routine, and he attributes that ritual to having only four "colds" or "flus" in thirty years. That's a pretty good record!

"What are your plans for the future?" I asked and added: "Retirement is not the end, but just a new chapter in one's life." Well, the house north of Williamsport, PA, has been sold in no time. A breathtaking view overlooking the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania helped. A condominium (still to be completed) overlooking the Delaware River in Bristol, PA, just half an hour north of Philadelphia has been purchased; the three-story apartment has an elevator, just in case the afflictions of old age set in and staircases are difficult to negotiate. The place is close to a Methodist church in New Jersey just across the river where Kim was choral director for several years; it is also close to his children and grandchildren, and it is close to several metropolitan areas, a biotope that makes this cosmopolitan thrive. "It looks like retirement to me," I ventured to say. And then Kim produced, with a smile, what he received, just three days ago, in the mail: a license for being an antique dealer in the State of New Jersey. Being a scuba diving instructor in Florida in the 1980s and a dealer of antiques in New Jersey in the 2020s seems to be an unusual way to bookend a splendid career at Mansfield University, but Kim has been successful in so many things: he will manage to astonish us in his new calling as well.

And after our conversation had come to an end, Kim took me aside: "I must add one more thought." He paused, as if he wanted to tell me a secret, and then continued. "I would like to express my gratitude to my great colleagues for their trust, support, and patience during all those years."



Youngsuk Kim posing in front of a poster, calling attention to his production of a Puccini opera at Seoul National University



## Faculty Mentor Nomination

From the first voice lesson I took with Professor Kim, I felt the special connection we still have today. We see each other for two hours every week: a fifty-minute master class on Tuesday and a one-hour voice lesson on Thursday, and so see each other so briefly (with the exception of opera rehearsals in the fall), upon walking in his office, it feels like I am meeting with a best friend. Professor Kim took my voice to new heights from my first semester here at Mansfield. He has a deep knowledge and passion when it comes to classical music. There is so much conviction in his teaching style. He totally shaped my practice ethic and made me both a better musician and student in the process. The ambition Professor Kim displays is awe-inspiring. He is a fantastic role model, and I am so blessed to have met him.



Peggy Dettwiler, Linda Seipler, Cassie Zinkan, and Youngsuk Kim  
in spring 2019, after Zinkan's senior recital

Cassie Zinkan, Outstanding Senior Nominee, 2018-19

## Another Tribute

I was privileged to study under Dr. Kim for his first two years at Mansfield. Sitting on the interview team as a student representative, I knew immediately that there would be a connection! And there was, bless his heart! He was going to take an overly sensitive, sniveling, insecure young woman and get more music out of her than she ever imagined possible! Easy? No. Worth it? TOTALLY! Hard work and perseverance was the only acceptable avenue.

Dr. Kim and I connected again about five years ago, and I studied with him for roughly another year. As if taking me on once wasn't enough for him! These lessons culminated in giving a recital in my home church. The reason? I had to have a goal! The recital was actually his goal for me, and I'm very appreciative that, with just the right amount of toughness and tenderness, we were able to achieve this goal! It was a combination of exhilarating and terrifying! However, his calm demeanor let me know that everything would be alright, and it was!

In my junior year of college, feeling completely overwhelmed and lost, I decided that I would quit. It was because of Dr. Kim's encouragement, kindness, understanding, and a very "matter of fact" talking to, that I was able to continue—even when things felt difficult—and obtain my degree. Dr. Kim was and is a man who has uncompromisingly high standards and who can pull more out of any student than they ever dreamed possible. It was an honor and privilege to study with him, both as a young adult, and as a "more seasoned" woman. (Let's face it - an old lady!)

Best wishes on your retirement, Dr. Kim. You have been an inspiration and blessing to the many lives you have touched. I know this first-hand and send you all my love.

Wendy Rosner (Class of 1989), Lewistown, PA, Teacher at Juniata Christian School, McAlisterville, PA

## And Another One

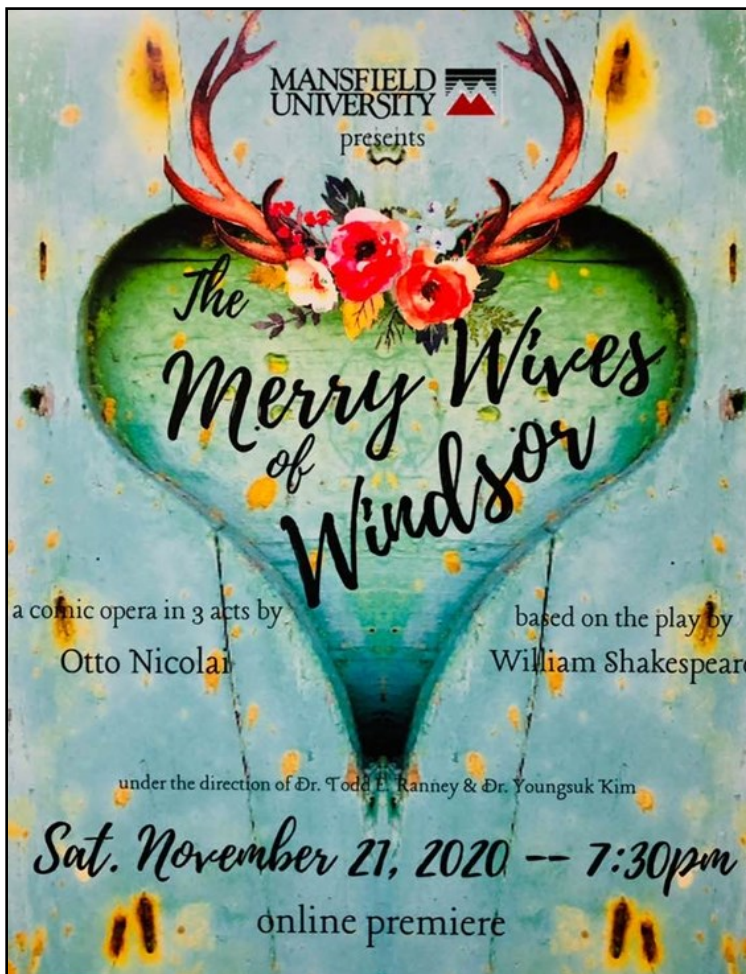
Dr. Kim's mentorship has been an invaluable gift over the years. Our successful and rewarding collaboration and our friendship has left a footprint in my life. I will always treasure the perspective and insights about musical expression he has so generously shared.

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."

BRAVO, Maestro!

Linda Seipler, Staff Pianist, Mansfield University

## The Merry Wives of Windsor Come To Mansfield, Virtually



A rarely-heard opera was produced by Mansfield University Opera in the fall and would have enchanted audiences in Straughn Auditorium on several evenings and a matinée, but, for obvious reasons, the performance was recorded in stages and then shown online on November 21. Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, premiered in Berlin in 1849 and first heard in the United States in Philadelphia in 1863, is based on Shakespeare's eponymous comedy. Getting the opera ready for performance in Mansfield under difficult conditions caused by the pandemic must have been a veritable obstacle course, but Professors Todd Ranney and Youngsuk Kim directed the cast of able singers, stagehands, and instrumentalists to result in a delightful evening.



Mrs. Ford (Jessica Nistad) and Mrs. Page (Lilia Lopez) discover that they have received identical love letters from Falstaff, an impoverished gentleman.





The same scene is shown as in the previous image, but now the roles of Mrs. Page and Mrs. Ford are sung by Emily Little and Rachel Gardner.



Since the merry wives of Windsor pretend to be interested in rendezvousing with Falstaff, Mr. Page (Andrew Clark, second from the right) and Mr. Ford (Matthew Merolla, center) are not amused by what they perceive as possible infidelity of their respective spouses. Jessica Nistad and Lilia Lopez are insisting, correctly, on their innocence.

The plot of the opera is a little more complicated (after all, it is opera) with a wedding being planned and three suitors having hopes to tie the knot. There are numerous secondary roles being sung by Grace Chamberlain and Deanna Mogianesi (Anne), Michael Deshield and John Tobey (Fenton), Jay Falgo and Seth Shields (Slender), Carson Witherite and Andrew Fouse (Dr. Cajus) and, above all, Falstaff (performed by Tyler Boyles and Tom McCutcheon), who ends up being hidden in a laundry basket and then ditched into a brook for a thorough cleansing of his lecherous thoughts.





Finale: A grand masked ball in Windsor Forest is the scene for a wedding of Anne and Fenton. Falstaff is lured to the scene as well under false pretenses (a tryst with his two women), but he is scared by the strange creatures he encounters there. Finally, the masks come off and the plot is revealed to him. Laughter and reconciliation end the comedy. (Note that the singers have turned a necessity into a virtue in this scene: Singing with masks is required here by dint of the opera's finale: a masked ball.)



A photo opportunity beckons during a rehearsal for the “orchestra”—a string quartet—with Youngsuk Kim and Linda Seipler standing. Note that the group observes social distancing and all individuals are wearing masks!

## “Silent Night, Holy Night”—Christmas Night in Vienna 1945

By Nan Lansinger (nlansinger@gmail.com)

*Bob Messinger was a singer in Mansfield University’s Festival Chorus for many years before he and his wife Mary Lee left Mansfield and moved to a retirement community in Lewisburg around the turn of the millennium. The following story would have made a nice addition to the last issue of Hear the Voices with a centerfold story devoted to the history of the Festival chorus (and its Christmas theme might have jibed with the issue’s publication in November 2020). But we did not learn about it until after having gone to print. The story was penned by Nan Lansinger, the Messingers’ daughter, of Bryn Mawr, PA. We are glad to bring it now in a slightly abbreviated version.*

My father, Robert George Messinger (born May 18, 1923, died February 7, 2008), was a student at Ithaca College, Ithaca, NY, majoring in music, when he was drafted in 1943 to serve his country. World War II was raging in Europe and in the Pacific Theatre, but gradually turning in favor of the United States and its allies. Majoring in music did not necessarily qualify him for a particular military unit. Thus, he had to go through a Specialized Training Program of the Army with a focus on engineering, in Alabama and Mississippi. More than a year later, his unit was shipped across the Atlantic Ocean, stationed briefly in Southern England before crossing the English Channel to land on Omaha Beach in France, six months after the initial invasion. There they stayed in pup tents until their equipment arrived. (“It rained every day,” he remarked in his diary.) It seems that my father’s unit was never deployed in battle. When the war ended in Europe, the men were prepared to go to the South Pacific, but, in August of 1945, the conflict ended there as well. For those who had enough points, they were sent home. For those who didn’t, they were sent to other places in Europe. My father was shipped to Vienna, Austria, as part of the military forces occupying that country.



Sgt. John Baldwin with his Glee Club of Soldiers in Vienna, Christmas 1945

Berchtesgaden, and a number of other places.

Most notably, the glee club performed a concert on Christmas night, December 25, 1945—entitled “SILENT NIGHT HOLY NIGHT”—in the Great Hall of the Vienna Konzerthaus. The concert was presented in conjunction with the USFA Special Forces Unit. (The capital letters probably stand for United States Forces in Austria—an abbreviation now only known to the cognoscenti.) My father was one of six other musicians featured as soloists that night. (See poster.) The concert must have resonated with my father as a high point of his times in the army; he jotted down in his diary: “Great experiences with a great conductor.” Two nights earlier, on December 23, the glee club sang with the Vienna Boys Choir. The glee club performances continued through Christmas and then through January and February in 1946. In April of 1946, my father shipped home to New York and within a week, he was a civilian in his hometown of Kingston, NY. In June, he returned to Ithaca College to complete his music degree (1948). After he graduated, he married my mother, Mary Lee Peterson

And now the story gains some traction by way of music. (Remember that my dad was a music major at Ithaca College before Uncle Sam called.) After a few days there, he heard about a men’s glee club in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division. Rather than standing guard duty endlessly, the glee club sounded good to him. He called their office and within a week, he became a member of the chorus of 60 men for about six months. They lived in three private homes in Vienna, rehearsed every morning, went sightseeing in the afternoon, and prepared and performed several nights a week for various affairs. Other nights they went to the opera or attended other cultural events. The ensemble was directed by Sgt. John Low Baldwin, Jr.; the manager of the Glee Club was Kenneth L. Zug. They visited Salzburg, Linz, Zell am See,

In Conjunction with USFA Special Service Office

THE 22<sup>nd</sup> INFANTRY REGIMENT GLEE CLUB  
Presents Their Christmas Festival

**“Silent Night  
Holy Night”**  
with

Sgt. **John L. Baldwin Jr.**, Master Organist  
Cpl. **Bernard Comsky**, Concert Pianist  
Sgt. **Robert Wilcox**, Baritone  
Sgt. **Ernest Sult**, Tenor  
Pfc. **Robert Messinger**, Baritone  
Pfc. **Lewis Hubka**, Tenor

**60 voice Soldier Chorus** singing your favorite Christmas Carols  
Conducted by Sgt. JOHN L. BALDWIN Jr.

Vienna Concert House Great Hall 25 December 1945  
19<sup>th</sup> Hours CHRISTMAS NIGHT 19<sup>th</sup> Hours

Admission 2 to 10 Schillings



Anderson, of Mansfield, Pennsylvania, and, within two years, he was on his way to becoming the owner and manager of the T. W. Judge Co. store at the intersection of Routes 15 and 6 in Mansfield. But music, in a way, never left him: he continued to sing as a soloist and in choral ensembles in Tioga County and further afield.



Singing Soldiers: Bob Messinger (center) in 1945

December 2020 would mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the noteworthy performance on Christmas night 1945. Although many of the men who sang in the glee club are likely deceased, the story signifies the importance of music as a force generating bonds between people, even those that formerly were enemies. It's possible that some of the men who sang in the Glee Club are still living today. My father would be 97 (if he were still alive). I know he would still be singing.

PS. **John Baldwin** (the glee club conductor) became the chair of the music department at Hamilton College in Clinton, NY. For 39 years he was the director of the University (Men's) Glee Club of New York. At the time of his death on December 31, 1999, he was the Music Director at The Church of Saint John on the Mountain in Bernardville, NJ. In 1992, Baldwin invited my father to be a guest performing member of the University Glee Club on a tour of Europe, and my mother and he accepted the offer. My parents lived in Mansfield, Pennsylvania and Dad prepared for the tour by practicing the music on his own. It was a thrill for him to be part of John's chorus. They toured, and Dad sang with the club in Berlin, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Munich, Salzburg, and Vienna – a truly fabulous experience allowing Dad to relive some of the experiences he had had as a private in the Army under the direction of Sgt John Baldwin in 1945. Baldwin was truly a unique individual, gifted in music at an early age, and a highly accomplished organist. His obituary in The New York Times said, "Baldwin brought a certain level of playfulness and perfectionism in his conducting." He died a few hours before the new millennium began but some of his glee club singers called him that evening to wish him a Happy New Year from Paris, where midnight and the new year had already arrived. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/09/nyregion/john-low-baldwin-76-conductor-of-the-university-glee-club.html>

## Virtual Visitors on Campus

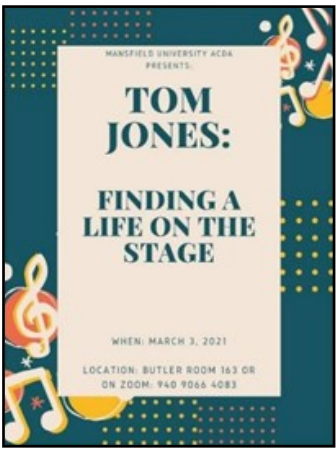
**Felicia Barber** (MM at MU 1999, now Westfield State University and President of ACDA Massachusetts) visited the campus virtually with a presentation entitled "Performance Practice: A Linguistic Approach to Dialect for African American Spirituals." (She has written a book about the subject that will be published shortly.) HTV is glad to share with its readers an abstract of her talk:

The interpretation of a piece of music is dependent on a number of factors that may include its melody, harmony, and rhythm. However, in the area of choral music it is the text that serves as a defining characteristic. The pronunciation and interpretation of text is key to understanding its meaning, as well as cultural interpretation. One of the most persistent problems found in the performance practice of African American Spirituals is its dialect. This presentation will review the history of the languages and dialects that developed out of the African Diaspora; discover how to apply the chief phonological features found; and instruct teachers how to employ these findings, using the International Phonetic Alphabet, to enhance the performance practice of spirituals.

**Stacey Gibbs**, composer of a wonderful arrangement of "Soon I Will Be Done," a heart-rending spiritual, came to campus (virtually) to coach the Mansfield University Concert Choir to add nuances and assert authorial suggestions. Here he is in the top left corner of the screen shot taken by the editor of HTV sneaking in on the proceedings. The other windows are more familiar to Mansfield audiences: Steadman Theatre from various angles. And most of you will notice that Madame Conductor as well as her choristers are wearing masks, thus observing protocol. Stacey Gibbs reportedly was delighted about what he heard and has been singing praises of the choir as well as adding a few more hints by email how to get even better.







**Tom Jones** (MU class of 1977, now Harvard University) was another virtual visitor on the Mansfield campus with a presentation “Finding a Life on the Stage”. His advice: Singers who want to expand their performing career should move to a city. Find a teacher or a choir in which to sing. Network. Practice diligently to be prepared. Believe in your own ability. Compliment one another. Get some performing experience before moving on to graduate school.

And there was **Harold Mortimer** (Class of 1988, recognized as a Distinguished Alum by Mansfield University), Associate Dean and Weitzenhoffer Endowed Professor of Musical Theatre at Oklahoma University, who offered his expertise on musical theatre to his alma mater: “The one thing that this pandemic has afforded us is the opportunity for guest artists to provide master classes via zoom. I am directing a musical this spring and have some associate dean duties but would always be happy to give a zoom master class to students from my alma mater free of charge. Obviously, my focus is musical theatre coaching and acting via the song but if there are any students/faculty that might want that to happen, I would be happy to provide the opportunity.” In March he appeared virtually on campus to give a one-hour master class on singing for Broadway to Mansfield University’s voice students.



Matt Merolla is shown receiving comments on his presentation of “Mr. Cellophane” from *Chicago*.

## Reported in Brief

When Mansfield University was searching for a choral conductor in 1990, the search committee (consisting of Joyce Wunderlich, Michael Galloway, and, perhaps, Donald Stanley) invited a stellar cast of characters to audition on the Eastern Hill. One of them was **Edith Copley**, who preferred the American Southwest over the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania (accepting a position at Arizona State University in Flagstaff, AZ); another one was Peggy Dettwiler, who has guided the choral affairs of Mansfield University for over thirty years. Both ladies became presidents of American Choral Directors Association of their respective regions (Southwest and Eastern). It recently was announced that Copley was elected President of the national organization. Congratulations to Edith Copley are in order, but, with a delay of more than thirty years, also to the search committee at Mansfield University: The group knew how to zoom in on future winners in the profession.



The fall concert was splendid and truly inspiring. Great balance, great readings and just a wonderful representation of the creative spirit in action. They all sounded truly marvelous. SO impressive.

Tom Jones, Harvard University

Thank you so much for your call regarding Howard and for alerting us to your program “Liberty and Justice for All” on YouTube. I just finished listening to it and my word is INCREDIBLE. The theme and the music chosen to carry out the theme were powerful and extremely emotional. I found myself in tears more than once. And how your students were able to create and project the outstanding quality of sound while wearing masks was unbelievable. Congratulations to you and to them for this program! Music is alive and well at Mansfield!

Linda Lee, Thompson, PA

I am currently a resident of Bradford County Manor, recovering from a left hip replacement.

When I turned on the TV for the noon news, on Christmas Day, I was so pleasantly surprised to see music students filing onto the stage. I recognized, at once, that it was the Mansfield University Choir. And sure enough, you came on to direct them. -- I feel for you and this year’s students, not to have concerts as usual. I recognized Jared Holmes and other folk from prior years. I even picked out Allen Goss and myself in one of the audience pictures. -- It was a joy to have you and the students singing Christmas Music, today!

Myra Goss, Mansfield, PA (watching a rerun of an earlier concert on a regional TV channel)

So many times, during this pandemic, I found myself turning to some of my recordings of MU choirs. I am so very thankful for the artistry, sensitivity, and overall “warmth” of that beautiful sound. I cannot wait to hear that “beauty” again soon—in person.

Ken Myers, Port Allegheny, PA

We listened to the YouTube Fall Concert, and it was truly wonderful. The work to pull this off must have been extraordinary, but of course you did it beautifully. A friend asked recently what I missed most during the pandemic, and I mentioned the usual: restaurants, movies, getting together with friends. But I also described my experience the past few years with Festival Chorus and how much of a hole this left in 2020. Watching the choirs perform in the audience sections of Steadman brought tears to my eyes as I remembered walking proudly down those stairs, singing and holding a candle. I can’t tell you how much Festival Chorus has meant to me, and I only hope to be able to renew that experience sometime soon.

Bob Cooper, Austinville, PA

My favorite parts of the concert: Love the new Melissa Murphy piece “Wild Embers” was beautiful. -- What a thoughtful and tender performance of “Mom I am going to college.” -- And then the transition and performance of “Adinu” ... gorgeous. -- Interesting and exciting arrangement of “Joshua” ... I have never heard it; I will definitely do more research on the Luboff. -- Wonderful arrangement of “How can I keep from singing.” I had not heard the Staheli arrangement. Beautiful. -- Loved the concert ... such beautiful programming ... I always love your transitions and selections. Very timely and relevant concert.

Felicia Barber (MU class of 1999, MA), Director of Choral Activities, Westfield State University;  
President, ACDA Massachusetts

I didn’t have a chance to listen to the concert until this morning. -- HOW THRILLING to see people singing together, giving HOPE on so many different levels - and at a caliber that can’t be beat. You’re on your game - so thoughtfully put together and musically prepared. And you can absolutely understand and get the words/diction through the masks. ... Amazing and inspirational, again, on so many levels.

Brian Hurst, Metropolitan Opera, NYC

## Mansfield Voice Students Recognized for Excellence

*It has been a good year for the voice students (and their respective studio teachers) at Mansfield University. Despite teaching and performing under strict regulations (and, in some cases, by remote), singing thrived and advanced to new levels on the Eastern Hill. The press release and lists that follow were provided by Alissa Rose.*

Voice students from Mansfield University recently won recognition at a regional event held by the National Association of Teachers of Singing. The Eastern Region student auditions, held online in February and March, included 466 entrants from schools and voice studios throughout the Eastern region, which comprises Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Quebec, and West Virginia. Five voice students from Mansfield were recognized at the competition.

Tenor **Seth Shields**, a junior Music Education major from Spring Grove, PA, won First Place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year College/Independent Studio TBB–Tenor Baritone or Bass category, singing “Ich grolle nicht” from Robert Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* on the final concert. Seth studies voice with Alissa Rose and was recently a winner in two Chapter NATS auditions, both in



## Fan Mail

PA and in NY (see below). Four other students received Honorable Mention awards:

Jay Falgo (3<sup>rd</sup> Year College/Independent Studio TBB), a junior Music Education and Music Performance major (student of Alissa Rose)  
Matthew Merolla (3<sup>rd</sup> Year College/Independent Studio TBB), a junior Music Performance major (student of Todd Ranney)  
Deanna Mogianesi (3<sup>rd</sup> Year College/Independent Studio Treble), a junior Music Performance major (student of Alissa Rose)  
John Tobey (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Year College/Independent Studio TBB), a senior Music Performance major (student of Todd Ranney)

In the National Association of Teachers of Singing student auditions, students compete against other students of a similar age and experience level. All students receive comment sheets from the judges, who are voice teachers and NATS members. These auditions are a great opportunity for the students to get feedback about their singing, hear other students from around the area, and be exposed to a wide variety of repertoire. NATS is the largest association of teachers of singing in the world, with members in more than twenty-five countries, and the student auditions are one of the major activities of each NATS chapter and region.

Voice students from Mansfield University recently also won recognition at two National Association of Teachers of Singing Student Auditions, the Allegheny Mountain Chapter (AMC) auditions, held virtually in November, and the Central New York Finger Lakes Chapter (CNYFL) auditions, held virtually in January. The AMC auditions generally include about 150 entries from around Pennsylvania, while the CNYFL auditions hear a similar number of students from around New York. This year, as the auditions were virtual, students from MU entered both competitions. Twenty students from MU entered the AMC auditions, and five students also entered the CNYFL auditions.

The three voice teachers at MU, Dr. Todd Ranney, Dr. Youngsuk Kim, and Dr. Alissa Rose, all had student winners at the competitions, where students competed against other students of a similar age and experience level. For the AMC NATS auditions, the top three winners in each category were featured in a final concert at the end of the auditions (<https://youtu.be/JpJ7uZ1nK0k>), while the CNYFL chapter concert only featured the first place winner in each category (<https://youtu.be/b0uQhCQfB3g>). All students received comment sheets from the judges, who are voice teachers and NATS members. These auditions are a great opportunity for the students to get feedback about their singing, hear other students from around the area, and be exposed to a wide variety of repertoire. NATS is the largest association of teachers of singing in the world, with members in more than twenty-five countries, and the student auditions are one of the major activities of each NATS chapter.

**AMC NATS Winners:**

Carson Witherite (Second Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Matthew Merolla (Third Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Seth Shields (Third Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Natalie Holsey (Third Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
Madison Felpel (Third Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
Michael Deshield (Fourth/Fifth Year College/Independent Studio TBB)

**AMC NATS Semi-Finalists:**

Taylor Stevens (First Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
Breanna Gardner (First Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
David Manassy (First Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Jessica Strouse (Second Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
Lily Woughter (Third Year College/Independent Studio Treble)  
Jay Falgo (Upper College Music Theater)

**CNYFL NATS Winners:**

Carson Witherite, Second Place (Second Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Nathan Myers, Third Place (Second Year College/Independent Studio TBB)  
Seth Shields, First Place (Third Year College/Independent Studio TBB)

**CNYFL NATS Finalists:**

Matthew Merolla (Third Year College/Independent Studio TBB)

Alissa Rose explains: “One of the complications is that AMC NATS calls the top three places “Winners,” and all others who make it to the second round “semi-finalists,” while CNYFL NATS lists the first three places as Winners, and lists all others who make it to the second round as Finalists, which is also what the regional auditions did. So the AMC Semi-finalists are equivalent to the CNYFL Finalists. The Regional auditions are really a step up from both of those, with over 3 times the entrants and a higher level of competition.” Now you know!

**PS. Seth Shields** (class of 2022) won in all three competitions organized by the National Association of Teachers of Singing (Allegheny Mountain Chapter, Central New York Finger Lakes Chapter, and Eastern Region). Rumor has it that he even performed one of his own songs for the judges. A resounding Bravo and sincere congratulations are in order!