

Echoes & Overtones

volume 2 ♪ number 1

Letter from the President

by **Melanie Kelly** Soprano '01

This is the second issue of **Echoes & Overtones**, the newsletter of the Gustavus Choir. This newsletter was founded with the hope that current members would be able to communicate with alumni. All alumni should receive two issues every year.

I am excited to announce that there are many new faces in choir this semester. The choir has grown in numbers from an average of 60 in past years to 74 this year. Choir has also become a family affair, with the addition of first-year member Berit Aune '03, Dr. Aune's daughter, and second-year member Jaron Aune '02, cousin of Dr. Aune and Berit.

The choir officer board, which is responsible for leadership of the choir, also has a new addition. In past years the choir board has consisted of the president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, chaplain, historians, robe custodians, section leaders, librarian, and crew chief. A new position has been created to help manage choir relations, which range from relationships with alumni to relationships with first-year members. The choir relations officer (junior Abby Ludvigson for the 2000–01 school year) is directly responsible for the organization of **Echoes & Overtones** and the continuation of all those G-Choir traditions, silly and serious, that we all hold dear to our hearts.

This semester finds the Gustavus Choir, busy as ever, preparing for Christmas in Christ Chapel and an extended tour. I hope you enjoy this issue of **Echoes & Overtones**. ♪

Music washes away from the
soul the dust of everyday life.

~ Red Auerbach ~

Taking the West by Storm

by **Angela Ziebarth** Alto '02

This January, the Gustavus Choir will venture west for a second time in recent memory. We have a busy and exciting schedule ahead of us.

For the first ten days of January, we will be spending upwards of five hours a day learning new pieces for the concert tour. Our program consists of a variety of music, including both Romantic and 20th-century choral pieces. Of course, being good representatives from our Swedish school, there will be several Scandinavian pieces in the mix.

We will be singing 20 concerts over the course of our tour, following a path from Seattle, through Portland, to San Francisco, San Diego, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Albuquerque, Denver, Rapid City, and ending in Apple Valley. We are privileged to sing at many beautiful concert sites, including Holy Trinity on the Olympic Peninsula, the Carmel Mission Basilica in Carmel, and the always-welcoming Cathedral of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Rapid City.

In addition to our concerts, the choir will be learning about the geography of the West under the instruction of Dr. Robert Moline. We will be meeting with city planners and will be learning about geographic features of the areas we travel through. The emphasis of the course is learning the processes by which people have affected and manipulated the natural environment.

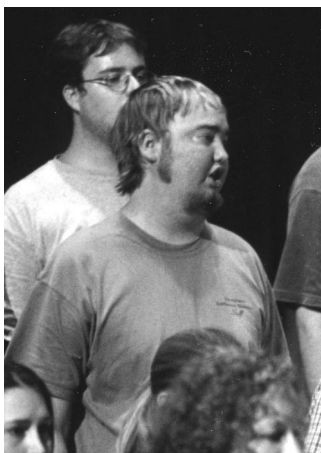


While all of this work sounds grueling, be ye not deceived. The Gustavus Choir can make a great time of anything. While we always enjoy playing 500, sleeping, and conversing on the bus, our tour also includes several free nights and social events. We will be spending a day at the Paramount Studios in Los Angeles. There are also tentative plans to experience Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, and perhaps tour a winery in California.

We wish to extend thanks to our hosts and supporters, particularly those who offered assistance in response to the last issue of **Echoes & Overtones**. We are thrilled to be able to share our music with you and the rest of the West Coast!

We hope to see G-Choir alumni and friends at our concerts!

2001 Tour continued on page 2



Personal Reflections on the Life of John Arne Monson

by Dr. Gregory Aune *Conductor*

Late August 1999. I am checking my phone messages. Click: "Dr. Aune, this is John Monson calling. I was unable to audition for Gustavus Choir this past spring and want to audition for you when I get back on campus in September. Please let me know when I can do this." Click. Well, I thought to myself, I guess this audition will take place whether or not I say so.

I get the *Gribly* and look up this person. Oh yes, the young man I noticed from the balcony during Christmas in Christ Chapel rehearsals last winter with that shock of blonde

hair. Another light goes on: this is the young man who became ill about this same time—which is why he missed the spring auditions. I call back: Yes, John, you will get that audition. Call me when you arrive on campus and I'll set it up.

So goes my first contact with John, and I think it typical. As I got to know John better during the year, I always was struck by his approach to living—"Let's get on with it."

Sometime early in that semester I happened to be walking home after rehearsal and he was just ahead of me. I caught up to him and asked him about his illness and what had happened. He quickly and calmly explained the disease and the treatment he had received. He said, with a shrug of his shoulders, "and that is the end of that." Message: thanks for asking, but I am not thinking about it, so why should you?

Fast forward. Family Weekend. I have my first contact with John's family. Mark, John's father, had previously e-mailed me a couple of times with more detailed information about John and told me that he would have a scan the Friday before Family Weekend. It will be definitive.

The Sunday of Family Weekend, as we are setting up for the concert, I see John and his family walk into the chapel. It is obvious that the news is not good. Nonetheless, come concert time, John stands with the choir, his first time in the maroon robe, singing with gusto!

How can he keep from singing?

As the year progresses I find myself becoming more and more involved and attached to this young man and his wonderful family. Initially I am afraid, but I realize that John is not afraid.

How can I keep from loving?

January Term—a safe, happy time for the choir and myself. We meet for rehearsals several hours in the afternoon. The choir comes over to our house a couple of times to practice the card game 500, to eat, relax, and enjoy the company. During one rehearsal John is sitting out with a sore throat, listening. I am conducting the choir and, as I often do, walk out into the hall to listen. I sit down next to John. The choir is singing; it sounds marvelous. I glance at John—he is smiling. I put my arm around him, and he lays his head on my shoulder. The choir continues singing; there is peace and love in the room.

John's life goes on in endless song, how can we keep from singing? ➤

NOTE: This personal reflection was presented by Dr. Aune at John's memorial service at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Duluth on October 28, 2000.

The 2001 Tour Itinerary:

- January 12 Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Port Angeles, Wash., 7 p.m.
- January 13 Trinity Lutheran College, Issaquah, Wash., 7:30 p.m.
- January 14 Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Seattle, Wash., 10 a.m.
- January 15 St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Beaverton, Ore., 7:30 p.m.
- January 17 Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Sacramento, Calif., 7 p.m.
- January 18 Bethel Lutheran Church, Cupertino, Calif., 7 p.m.
- January 19 Carmel Mission Basilica, Carmel, Calif., 8 p.m.
- January 20 Christ Lutheran Church, Visalia, Calif., 7:30 p.m.
- January 21 Solana Beach Presbyterian Church, Solana Beach, Calif., 7 p.m.
- January 22 Emmanuel Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, Calif. 7:30 p.m.
- January 24 Eden Lutheran Church, Riverside, Calif., 7:30 p.m.
- January 25 Peace Lutheran Church, Peoria, Ariz., 7:30 p.m.
- January 26 Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Phoenix, Ariz., 7:30 p.m.
- January 28 St. Luke Lutheran Church, Albuquerque, N.M., 10:15 a.m.
- January 29 Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community Santa Fe, N.M., 7 p.m.
- January 30 Christ Lutheran Church, Highlands Ranch, Colo., 7:30 p.m.
- January 31 Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Wheat Ridge, Colo., 7 p.m.
- February 1 Cathedral of Our Lady, Rapid City, S.D., 7:30 p.m.
- February 2 Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, S.D.
- February 4 Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church, Apple Valley, Minn., 3:30 p.m.
- February 10 Christ Chapel, Gustavus Adolphus College **Home Concert**, 7:30 p.m.
- February 11 Arlington Hills Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., 9:30 a.m. ➤



Choir recordings, including the Gustavus Choir's most recent CD, *Sing South Africa*, are available from the Book Mark on the Gustavus campus. Check out the Book Mark's Web site at www.bookmark.gustavus.edu, or call them at 507/933-7587.

“Heaven and Nature Sing” Christmas in Christ Chapel 2000

Allison Hawley Alto '03

Despite the unseasonably warm weather of the fall (What? Flip-flops and shorts in October?!), we're about to be handed another icy Minnesota winter, and with that comes you-know-what—Christmas in Christ Chapel! Even though Christmas in Christ Chapel is a holiday favorite of many Gusties—alumni and current students as well as family and friends—very few people see what goes on outside of the actual performances—the preparation of the entire program by the chaplains, or the hours of rehearsal put in by the musical ensembles.

“Heaven and Nature Sing” is the theme of 2000's Christmas in Christ Chapel. The program itself is a collaborative project between the chaplains' office and the music department. The theme of this year's Christmas in Christ Chapel is salvation and redemption that Jesus' birth brings not only to humankind, but also to the earth and the environment. Such increased environmental awareness has already been seen on campus in the Nobel Conference's focus on globalization, and also in the environmental focus of many January Term classes. Johnson mentions that such a shift in environmental awareness is relatively new, from a Christian standpoint. Humanity in partnership with the earth, rather than a ruler over it, is important to this year's theme.

Christmas in Christ Chapel will be divided into four parts within the theme of “Heaven and Nature Sing.” The Gustavus Choir's beautiful, sustained “Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming” is one of the final pieces of Christmas in Christ Chapel and illustrates the sustenance that Christ provides for the earth and its inhabitants. Scripture from Genesis, Luke, and Isaiah provides the backbone of the service, while pieces from the Gustavus Choir, the Christ Chapel Choir, the Lucia Singers, the Gustavus Orchestra, and the Christ Chapel Ringers interpret and illustrate the scripture through music.

The ability of Christmas in Christ Chapel to inspire and lift both its participants and its audience is what brings Gusties back year after year, eager to be part of something so much larger than themselves. ➤

May the Circle Be Unbroken: Gustavus Choir Traditions Continue in the New Millennium!

by Toby Stalter Tenor '02, **and Katie Scheel** Soprano '02

The Fall of 2000 began a new year of classes and a new group of singers assembled as the first Gustavus Choir of the new millennium. But amidst the changes, the several Gustavus Choir traditions have remained a constant in the choir's history.

Sunday, October 15, marked the first performance of the 2000–2001 season with the annual Family Weekend Concert. As Gustavus families gathered, the choir donned robes and joined the Gustavus Orchestra and Lucia Singers in Christ Chapel. Together, the groups shared their music. But for some G-Choir members, the most memorable song was one that was sung after the concert. Before disrobing, the Gustavus Choir joined together and sang what tradition has dubbed “The Circle Song” (Oh God, Our Help in Ages Past). The “Circle Song” and “Ja Må Han Leva,” known to the choir as the “Swedish Thank-You Song,” are just two of the many songs that have a rich history within the choir. These songs all have a special purpose, whether it be to thank the cooks who feed the choir on tour, to wish the tour's bus drivers good morning, or to reflect and thank the Lord for a wonderful concert together. Many choir members in years past remember these songs, and memories will keep these traditions in years to come.

However, as with many things, memories do fade and songs are left behind. Perhaps most enjoyable is the rediscovery of these lost memories. “Remember” is a song that many Gustavus Choir alumni may remember, but one that more recent choir members are not as familiar with. This year's choir is sparking a revival of this joyous song and has begun to use it at various choir functions.

In addition to the traditional songs, this year's choir is continuing some newer traditions and functions. One such function is the Gustavus Choir banquet, which was held earlier this year in the new Jackson Campus Center. Fellowship and fun was enjoyed by all, as the more recent tradition of entertaining skits was held. The new members of the choir were required to use their imaginations and “pass orientation” by entertaining experienced members with a skit or dialogue. (Humor and spontaneity are guaranteed elements.) Last, but certainly not least, the day ended with a game of touch football. The game paired the sopranos and tenors against the altos and basses. (Don't jump to conclusions—this year's game again emerged with the sopranos and tenors victorious.) May good times and memories continue as the Gustavus Choir enters the new millennium! ➤



For more information about the Gustavus Choir, its tour itinerary, concert appearances, or any of the articles in **Echoes & Overtones**, contact:

♪ **Dr. Gregory Aune**, Conductor
Department of Music
Gustavus Adolphus College
800 West College Avenue
Saint Peter, MN 56082-1498
Ph.: 507/933-7347
<gaune@gustavus.edu>

♪ **Dean Wahlund**, Tour Manager
Office of Public Affairs
Gustavus Adolphus College
Ph.: 507/933-7521
<dwahlund@gustavus.edu>

To recommend talented high school students who are interested in participating in vocal music programs in college, contact Dr. Aune or the Office of Admission at the College.

Continuing the Tradition

by **Melanie Kelly** Soprano '01

The choir would like to joyfully announce the marriage of two members. On June 24, 2000, Roy Heilman '00 and Amy Benson '99 were married in Christ Chapel on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College. To the delight of the choir, Amy and Roy continued the tradition of "presidential marriages."



Amy was the president of the choir during the 1998–1999 school year, and Roy was president during the 1999–2000 school year. The last presidential marriage occurred between Brian Ohnsorg, who was president during the 1996–1997 school year, and Shelly Kuehn, who was president during the 1997–1998 school year.

In attendance at the ceremony and reception were many choir folk. As many G-Choir members know, at any large dinner function, it is a requirement that there is at least one clap-up. Not wanting to disappoint, choir members clapped-up Roy to serenade his new wife. Roy had anticipated the possibility of a clap-up of this nature and prepared a song. After explaining the clap-up tradition to those who did not understand, he sang "I Can't Help Falling in Love With You," originally sung by Elvis. It was a wonderful moment. Congratulations, Amy and Roy!

Tentative Touring Plans in the Years Ahead

2002 – Upper Midwest (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois)

2003 – International Tour (Scandinavia or South America)

2004 – High Plains (North and South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota)

2005 – East Coast or Florida

Is the choir touring in your area? Do you know of a good venue? Contact Tour Manager Dean Wahlund by phone (507/933-7521) or e-mail (dwahlund@gustavus.edu) with your suggestions. ➤
