

the gustavus choir

Echoes & Overtones

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G-Choir on Tour 2002

by Paul Miller Bass '02

As any Gustavus Choir member can attest, the year 2002 has been a great year for touring even though we have not left the region. After many long rehearsals on campus during January Term, the choir enjoyed lots of Midwest hospitality as it toured Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois during a ten-day tour. Abundant Gusties and especially choir alums made our concerts and home-stays fun for everyone involved, and Dr. Aune's succinct instructions and dependable antics made even the rehearsal time pass quickly.

This quick, regional tour yielded many great memories. In short, the choir made friends wherever it went. "Culver's" restaurants get the prize this year for the most impromptu performances, with unsuspecting patrons being serenaded in two different locations, but "Giordano's," the famous Chicago pizzeria, got one performance as well. So many great clap-ups were performed during pre-concert meals, as well as skits and other performances, that there is not space enough for them here, but veteran choir members agree that this year's may have been the best ever.

We were blessed with good weather for the tour, especially during our free time in Chicago and Madison. In addition to a number of high school clinics in the Milwaukee and Rockford areas, the choir squeezed in one afternoon performance-exchange with the University of Chicago's choral ensemble in the University's Rockefeller Chapel. Afterwards, we took a memorable trip up the chapel's carillon bell tower on endless spiral staircases, where the choir earned the distinction of being accompanied by the world's largest instrument in a rousing rendition of Kermit the Frog's greatest hit, "The Rainbow Connection." Our free night in Chicago allowed choir members a respite from

performance, but most kept busy with the city's exciting culinary and theatrical opportunities, including the Blue Man Group and Second City's improv comedy. While in the Quad Cities, the choir took the opportunity during a visit to John Deere's international headquarters to take a group

picture with choir members hanging all over a giant road construction implement. Throughout the tour, we had many adventures with Duane and Ozzy, the choir's amazing bus drivers for many years

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Choir members crowded into the carillon bell tower at the University of Chicago's Rockefeller Chapel to sing along with the world's largest carillon instrument.



Waiting for Chicago-style pizza, in Chicago!

Conductor's Column

by **Dr. Gregory Aune** Conductor



This academic year has been an intense and fruitful one for the members of the Gustavus Choir and myself. The October premiere of the *Nobel Symphony*, a "Celtic Christmas," touring the Midwest, a historic performance at the American Choral Directors Association North Central Division Convention in Des Moines—all significant and meaningful experiences made possible through the hard work and talents of the young men and women in the Gustavus Choir. We're scheduled to be in recording session at First Lutheran Church in early May, and anticipate the release of a new CD next fall. Our spring concert (May 11) featured works of Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells, William Mathias, and Mozart. The choir will conclude the year participating in Alumni Vespers and Baccalaureate services.

As the end of the academic year approaches my thoughts inevitably turn to the graduating seniors. Whether they are third-year members, or if this was their one and only year in G-Choir, there is a sense of loss when I think of letting go. I have fleeting thoughts—"It won't be the same next year with these people gone." But I must emphasize fleeting, as I then remind myself that this happens each year, and each new version of the Gustavus Choir and will have its own unique dynamic and personality that will mesh with a solid tradition established long before my time here. In several weeks a new G-Choir will be auditioned and chosen, and one year from now I will be experiencing the same nostalgia, and the circle will continue.

Thank you, G-Choir alumni, for your part in creating and sustaining the never-ending circle that is Gustavus Choir! ➤

Contact Information

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

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Letter from the President

by **Tanner Hammerschmidt** Tenor '02

Spring greetings to all alumni from the windy hill. As you read this issue of *Echoes & Overtures*, you will find that the Gustavus Choir has accomplished several goals that are both significant to the ensemble's future and also important milestones in its history. It has been an incredible year, but also a very challenging one, as we learned complex music and performed in high-pressure situations. Despite the exertion that we put forth this spring, it is difficult to imagine a more exciting or enjoyable time to be a member of the G-Choir.

As a senior, this spring has been an especially reflective time for me. I have been thinking about the friends I have made, some as a freshman, and many only this past year. I have been making

a conscious effort to enjoy each day with these people, and to appreciate the conversation and laughter that we share. But aside from the friendships, it will be the choir that I will truly miss. I know that there is no other ensemble like it, and that it may be the only chance I'll have to be surrounded by such quality musicians and people. It has been such a privilege and joy in my life, and I know that I can never replace it.

It is important to me, however, to know that there are many who have gone before our graduating class of 2002. You alumni have felt the sense of loss that we feel when we think about leaving G-Choir. You have stood in that circle with your peers (some of them crying, others trying not to) and your

director, and sung that final song. I realize that the strongest emotion that has been with me these years in the Gustavus Choir has been pride—to know that I am a part of a larger whole, a family, that has created beautiful music together.

It is this sense of family that has eased my impending feeling of loss. Although I will be in the audience next year rather than performing with the choir, my heart will always be in the music. I'm sure that I will feel the same sense of pride that you do when you attend Christmas in Christ Chapel or other choral events. It is a great thing that we have all participated in, and great things last a lifetime. ➤

Check Out the Gustavus Choir Online

by **Nathan Selander** Bass '03

For many readers, this semiannual newsletter may be your only source of information about the Gustavus Choir. Allow me to introduce a second, more frequently updated and easily accessible option: the Gustavus Choir Web site. Located at <www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/academics/music/choir/>, the Web site contains a plethora of information about the choir.

The Web site serves both as a convenient place to find all the conventional information about the choir and, at the same time, as a unique repository of information that could not be distributed via other means. At the Web site, you will find a summary of the choir detailing its composition, schedule, and philosophy. You may also read a biography of the choir's conductor, Dr. Aune.

The latest version of the Gustavus Choir's concert and performance schedule is always available. Similarly, there is a list of current members and officers, accompanied by section photos taken during Christmas in Christ Chapel. The Gustavus Choir's schedule, program, and complete itinerary from the recent Midwest Tour are online as well. In the spirit of the unique distribution opportunities offered by the Web, an online photo album of more than 60 pictures from the tour, taken by Choir historian Kerstin Blazina, is also available. Finally, archived versions of this very newsletter, *Echoes & Overtones*, are presented in the form of Adobe Acrobat PDF files. As Gustavus Choir webmaster, I encourage you to check out the Web site, and to continue to check back in the future to see what's new with the G-Choir!

Reverberations!

Alumni choir members, parents, and choir friends are invited to share their memories, experiences, highlights, photos, and practical jokes with the other readers of this newsletter. We're always on the lookout for those meaningful moments that have contributed to the tradition that surrounds the Gustavus Choir. Send your stories and photos to Tour Manager Dean Wahlund or Conductor Greg Aune (see elsewhere in this issue for addresses). ➤

Much More Than Velvet: Reflections by a Senior

by **Meghan Harney** Soprano '02

I laugh when I think of my musical beginnings. My family has always taken long roadtrips, and to keep me (the talkative one) quiet, my tone-deaf parents would placate me with Fisher Price, batteries, and tapes of my father's record collection. I spent my childhood in the backseat of a car singing Jefferson Airplane and Blue Oyster Cult—not to mention a little bit of Wee Sing. As I got into school, I joined various children's choirs and enjoyed being the one to sing the loudest at weekly mass. We even got to sing for former Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson at a wind turbine dedication ceremony! When I entered high school, I signed up for choir because I felt I should continue, and that went for contests and jazz choir too. Likewise, when I began to apply to colleges, I must confess that I was initially more interested in scholarships than in singing, since I couldn't see myself as being like all the other hardcore singers. Now, I sing because I enjoy it, and whether I'm good at it or not doesn't matter to me (although it probably does to my section), as long as I still have fun doing it. To quote Dr. Aune, "I still can't believe they pay me to do this." My choir experiences at Gustavus have brought me through Lucia Singers, Christ Chapel Choir, and, finally, Gustavus Choir. While the thought of starting the rest of my life scares me, the thought that I am starting it not in a choir scares me more. I wouldn't trade any of my experiences for anything. ➤

In Shape for an Energetic Performance

by **Kära Fox** Soprano '02

While it was a great honor to be invited to the ACDA Convention this year, the Gustavus Choir was not presented with the most desirable performance time. After all our hard work preparing for our debut at the convention, going on stage at 9:35 A.M. called for a serious plan of action. How could we all be awake and alive enough to dazzle the audience that early in the morning?

Luckily, everyone in the choir had a terrific attitude and a working alarm clock. Each member was up and in the hotel banquet room by 6:00 A.M. for mandatory choir aerobics. Junior soprano Amy Hiscock, a health and exercise science major and a certified aerobics instructor, led the entire choir in a calorie-burning, muscle-toning, alert-for-singing exercise routine that livened us into the ideal physical state for performing, and left us with "buns of steel"! Even Dr. Aune participated in this first-ever choral event, sporting his Gustavus Choir SWEATshirt.

We have now proven that we as singers even groan in perfect harmony! ➤

Tentative Touring Plans for the Years Ahead

2003 – International
(January Term)
Italy

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

2005 – Eastern Tour
(January Term or
Touring Week)
Middle States, East Coast,
or Florida

2006 – Midwest/West
(Touring Week)
Minnesota, Iowa,
South Dakota, Colorado

*Is the Choir touring in your area?
Do you know of a good venue?
Call Tour Manager Dean Wahlund
at 507/933-7521 with your
suggestions.* ➤

Join the Choir's Companion Tour in Italy!

A special invitation is extended to alumni, parents, and friends of Gustavus and the Gustavus Choir to join the choir on a memorable tour of Italy in January 2003.

A "companion trip" currently being planned by the Office of Alumni Relations for January 20–February 3 will begin in Rome while the choir is in the south of Italy (they will have started their concert tour a week earlier), then join the choir in Assisi and parallel their itinerary throughout the rest of the tour. You'll see many of Rome's famous landmarks: the Coliseum, the Forum, St. Peter's Cathedral, the Sistine Chapel, and Tivoli. En route from Rome to Florence, you'll stop at Assisi's Basilica of St. Francis, at Siena, and at San Gimignano. In Florence, sights include the Academia with Michelangelo's statue *David* (pictured), the Duomo and Baptistry Doors, Uffizi Gallery, Ponte Vecchio, and more. After a stop in Verona, the tour concludes in Venice, where you'll see St. Mark's Square and the Basilica and perhaps enjoy a gondola ride on the Grand Canal.



All this—and the opportunity to hear the Gustavus Choir in concert at historic venues—promises to be an exciting and enriching experience. The tour will have its own guide and motorcoach, as well as upgraded accommodations. For more information, call the Office of Alumni Relations at 800/487-8437 or send an e-mail request to <alumni@gustavus.edu>. ➤

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running. I think we will all remember when Duane's one little mistake put a tree branch through the bus's bathroom window in a church parking lot in Moline, Illinois!

The choir's special invitation to this year's American Choral Directors Association convention in Des Moines gave the choir the chance to take a brief, additional tour to the humble but many-splendored state immediately to our south. It didn't take much time back on the bus before the choir was right back in stride. A 9:35 A.M. concert at the convention meant early rising in order to wake up bodies and voices. At 6:00 A.M. the choir gathered in a hotel banquet room for aerobics led by some choir members. The choir arrived at the Des Moines Civic Center alert and ready to go. The choir's intense concentration while performing modern Scandinavian compositions for hundreds of choir directors yielded one of our best performances and a very satisfying finale to our performances on the road. ➤