

the gustavus choir

Echoes & Overtones

volume 4 ✂ number 1

Letter from the President

Greetings and blessings to you as another year of Gustavus Choir tradition continues! A new school year brings us an addition of fresh talent to join the returning veterans for a season of learning. The old members teach the new to carry on cherished traditions such as the meaningful Circle Song, our annual choir banquet, entertaining new-member skits, and the ever-competitive inter-choir sports games!

As a member of the choir leadership, I find myself discovering more every day about the mechanics of a choir and, more importantly, the importance of each member and the knowledge, skills, and ability he or she brings to this choir. I believe we are learning to seek a higher level of musicality with Dr. Aune's years of experience guiding us.

Of course, we have a plethora of new music. We performed Mozart's *Requiem* for the annual Nobel Conference (Dr. A is always nurturing our nature of singing!), we shared our music with our parents at Parents' Weekend, and we occasionally worship through music in Daily Chapel services. As of late, we are brushing up on our Swedish, preparing for the time-honored tradition of Christmas in Christ Chapel and its "Julbön" theme.

But even as we join together in making beautiful music now, our 2003 tour has been on every singer's mind. We're going to Italy! Three weeks of traveling, singing, and excellent bonding time during our January Term. We can't wait to tell everyone how it turned out!

In the meantime, take time to reminisce about some of your most memorable choir moments as you read about ours. Please feel free to write to us and share them! And, as always, we love to have your support in the audience at our performances. ➤

Peace and Harmony,

Annie Joy Johnson '03, soprano

A Journey of Epic Proportions

by Ntxuam Vang '04, tenor



St. Peter's square in Rome, one of many stops on the Choir's Italian Tour.

Buon Giorno! This is a greeting that we'll all be using in just a few short months as the Gustavus Choir tours Italy. We are all excited to have such a wonderful experience that includes what we all love—singing! Though our primary reason for touring is to give the Italian people a taste of an American choral concert, we'll also be enriching ourselves by taking in Italy's wonderful and rich culture. Some cities that are on our agenda are Rome, Sorrento, Assisi, Florence, and Venice.

While in Rome (Roma), we'll have the chance to visit the Colosseum, Forum, St. Peter's Basilica, the Appian Way, the Catacombs, the Vatican Museums, and the Sistine Chapel. The Colosseum is the most famous monument of ancient Rome, built during Emperor Vespasian's reign and finished by his son Titus in 80 AD. During our free time, we may do more exploration of the city by taking a ride on the Metro (the subway system), getting a taste of

gelato (the American counterpart of ice cream in Italy), or maybe visiting the Hard Rock Café, just one of Rome's many restaurants.

During our stay in Florence (Firenze), we'll be performing our choral literature at Chiesa Santa Maria dei Ricci as well as touring places such as the Uffizi Gallery and Bargello. We'll also have an opportunity to participate in an evening worship service at the Duomo, in the heart of Florence. The Duomo is captured in nearly every postcard, book, and painting that advertises Florence. It stands tall, adjacent to the Baptistry and the Campanile. It is arguably Brunelleschi's best work, and no other architect in Italy has matched his talent. No other building stands higher than the Duomo, which is the largest church in the Catholic world.

Journey continued on page 5

Conductor's Column

by Dr. Gregory Aune, Conductor



Greetings from Gustavus, and welcome to another issue of *Echoes and Overtones*! As most of you remember very well, this time of year finds the G Choir and many other musical ensembles on campus heavily into preparations for Christmas in Christ Chapel. This year's program, *Julbön*, will feature the Advent and Christmas music of Sweden. It has been interesting to learn in depth about the musical traditions of Sweden associated with the Yule season.

I am pleased to announce and share with you the fruits of a generous gift from Ruth and Ross Heilman, both members of the Class of 1973 and parents of recent G Choir alums Roy and Jake. The Heilmans have endowed a special fund for commissioning new choral works for the Gustavus Choir. This gift will allow the Choir to periodically

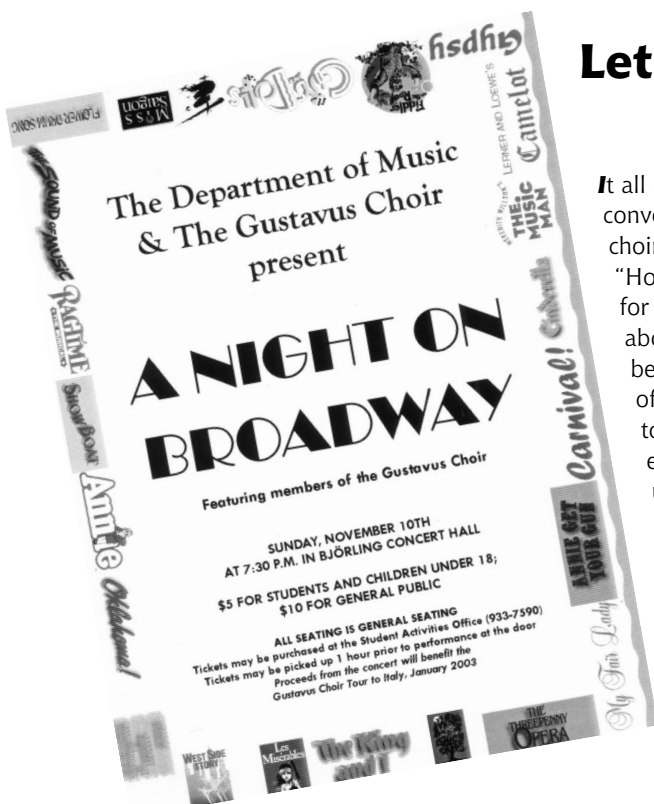
seek out talented composers to create choral works written specifically for the ensemble and/or special events pertinent to the choir's mission. Jaakko Mänteyjärvi, an internationally known Finnish composer, is putting the final touches on a new work commissioned through this endowment. The piece, titled *Death may dissolve*, is based on a hymn tune by the early American composer William Billings titled "Chesterfield," with a text by Isaac Watts. We tentatively plan to premier *Death may dissolve* during the choir's tour of Italy in January 2003, and it will hopefully receive many more hearings. Thank you, Ruth and Ross, for this extraordinary gift and opportunity for the choir! ➤

Contact Information

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 Relations
Gustavus Adolphus College
800 West College Avenue
Saint Peter, MN 56082-1498
Ph.: 507/933-7521
<dwahlund@gustavus.edu>



Let's Go On with the Show!

by Andrew Hasty '03, tenor

It all started with a casual conversation between a few choir members over dinner: "How can we help raise money for Italy?" Someone said, "How about a Broadway revue?" And before you knew it, members of the Gustavus Choir pulled together to organize this extravaganza; posters went up, tickets were printed, press releases were sent, and a program was set.

Audience members packed into Björling Recital Hall on Sunday, November 10, at 7:30 p.m. to see members of the Gustavus Choir perform

some of their favorite musical theater selections. The ticket proceeds went toward outings for the whole choir, such as dinner or the opera, for their upcoming international tour of Italy.

The concert opened with a standard Broadway hymn, "There's No Business Like Show Business" from *Annie Get Your Gun*. Other selections came from *Rent*, *The Sound of Music*, *My Fair Lady*, *Godspell*, *South Pacific*, *Miss Saigon*, and even more shows. Our illustrious Choir president, Annie Johnson, and chaplain, Ann Humburg, hosted the evening's festivities. The evening closed with a stellar finale, "Seasons of Love" from *Rent*. You never know—some day you may see one of these singers on Broadway! ➤

Check Out the Gustavus Choir Online

For more information about the Gustavus Choir and its concert and tour schedules, check out the Gustavus Choir's home page at:

www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/academics/music/choir/index.cfm

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 page 2 in this issue for addresses).

CDs Available Online

Choir recordings, including the Gustavus Choir's CD of its groundbreaking 1999 tour of South Africa, *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.

This newsletter is published two times during the academic year for Gustavus Choir members, alumni, parents, and friends. Production is coordinated by Steve Waldhauser '70, publications coordinator at the College and Gustavus Choir alumnus; Steve Hogberg '69, associate vice president for gift planning at the College and Gustavus Choir alumnus; and Allison Hawley, vice president of the 2002-03 Gustavus Choir.

Meet Joe! by Dan Roeder '03, tenor

Attending a choir performance is a memorable experience for many reasons. There is electricity in the air—a lingering sense of anticipation for what the performance will hold. Some questions we might ask are: What will the choir perform? Will I, the audience member, like it? How will I be different after the performance? The choral force is at its prime, focused on the man with the baton.

harmonizes with the warm-ups, much to Dr. A's dismay. Sometimes he gets backrubs. Joe's favorite warm-up is an arpeggiation over an octave while singing, "I loooooooooove to siiiiiiiiiing!" Boy, does Joe love to sing!

After the choir is warmed up, Joe eagerly opens his folder and takes out his pencil (much to Dr. A's delight!), so he's ready to scribble down any pointers that will help



G Choir rehearsal under the direction of Dr. A.

But what is everyday life like as a choir member? What lurks in the seemingly mundane? We will take a gander into the life of "Joe," a current Gustavus Choir member.

Joe begins his daily choral experience in the hallway next to the folder slots. He finds pleasure in socializing there with his choir friends. Time marches on toward 4:30 p.m., and Joe casually makes his way to room 214, where he finds the rest of the choir chattering away. Joe mingles around the room until he hears the familiar pounding of a C major triad—Dr. Aune's signal that it's time to start warm-ups. Joe loves warming up. Sometimes he gets so excited that he

him achieve a higher degree of musicality. Joe sings piece after piece, by Brahms and Schütz and Swedish composer after Swedish composer, trying his best to enunciate all the foreign languages. Dr. A stops occasionally to fix notes or suggest dynamics, or to make a witty comment or two (or five!). That Dr. A is such a kiddier.

Before Joe realizes it, choir rehearsal is over, and announcements are being made about upcoming choir events. Joe can't wait to play broomball in December with the rest of the choir. He'll show those altos and basses a thing or two! But most of all, Joe can't wait until tomorrow, when he can start his choir day all over again. ➤

A Gustavus Choir Glossary by Paul Biederman '03, bass, and Allison Hawley '03, alto



Choir members have a long-standing tradition of playing 500 in the tour bus.

You may have encountered terms and phrases in past choir newsletters that have confused you, but fear not! The “Gustavus Choir Glossary” is an introduction to the culture and traditions that pervade choir members and choir history. Below, you will find a list of terms that will help you read (and understand!) future newsletters.

Duane & Ozzie: Our loveable bus drivers! Duane and Ozzie drive two tour buses that have carried us on every choir tour since... who knows when! They won't be with us in Italy—'cause buses can't drive through the ocean. We'll miss them.

“500”: A bridge-like card game involving four choir members. Each year on tour, the choir plays an annual 500 tournament, with the winners receiving such illustrious prizes as plastic saltshakers and cafeteria trays. Most games are played on the bus using pillows for tables, or at churches before meals.

The Thank You Song: Sung in both Swedish and English. The Choir sings the Thank You Song to thank our meal providers at each tour stop, usually a church.

Lasagna: Our favorite (and often, only) tour meal!



Tenor Drew Hasty was “clapped up” at the Fall Choir Banquet to sing “I’m a Little Teapot.”

The Circle Song: “O God, Our Help In Ages Past.” The Choir sings the Circle Song after every performance, while standing in a circle and swaying. This song has replaced the Remember Song (remember that?!).

Clap-up: An act performed by a choir member, usually to their chagrin; clap-ups occur almost exclusively on tour, but have been known to crop up at any major choir function. A table of choir members, while eating, will decide to “clap-up” another choir member by clapping three times and then yelling, “Hey, [insert name], do [humiliating and devastatingly funny act]!” The selected person must then perform the act, or be shunned by fellow choir members for the rest of the tour. Choir members are always clapped up to sing their high school songs in their hometowns, should the choir stop there on tour. Dr. A’s favorite clap-up? The “Ewok Song” from *Star Wars* as performed by former tenor Scott Doerrie! Our favorite clap-up? Dr. A. serenading wife Julie with a romantic song of his own choosing—by Led Zeppelin.

New-Member Skits: Each new choir member is required to perform a skit at the annual Fall Choir Banquet, to get to know each other and to amuse the senior choir members! Rarely do the skits make sense, but they are always hilarious.

Choir Football: The annual “Fall Football Spectacular” that always immediately follows the Fall Choir Banquet. The alto and basses take on the tenors and sopranos for section bragging rights for the rest of the year (or until the Choir Broomball game).

Choir Broomball: A new event! Same deal, same teams, different surface, different ball. Same injuries!

Dr. Aune’s Dry Humor: Our fearless leader is blessed with the driest wit around, often pausing in the middle of rehearsals to throw out such gems as: “Molto Legato? That was Molto In-Your-Face-o!...I think the stranger the thing I say, the longer you’ll remember it.” He’s irreplaceable!

Now that you are familiar with the Gustavus Choir traditions, feel free to stop by a rehearsal, concert, or tour stop, and clap, sing, dance, eat, and laugh with us! ➤

Journey continued from page 1

Our last stop is Venice (Venezia), but before we hit Venice we'll pause for a quick stopover in Verona to see the Roman Amphitheatre and Romeo and Juliet's Balcony. Once in Venice, we'll unpack our luggage at the Grand Hotel Principe and then head as a choir for a wonderful Venetian dinner. Some of the sites we'll get to see include St. Mark's Square and the Doge's Palace, and we will perform in an evening concert at St. Mark's Basilica. On our time off in this splendid city, we'll get a chance to take a gondola ride or even hop from one island to the next by way of water-taxi. Perhaps we'll see first-hand some Venetian glass blowing, which has existed for over a thousand years.

Besides getting to see the many wonders of Italy, we'll also have quite a repertoire of music. Our choral literature includes pieces by Thomas Tomkins, Heinrich Schütz, Charles Wood, Johannes Brahms, Sarah Hopkins, and many more.

Out of the many pieces that we'll be singing, Hopkins' *Past Life Melodies* is a piece that is unique in more ways than one. Hopkins, a native of Australia, wrote this piece in 1991 and commissioned it for the St. Peter's Chorale in Brisbane, Australia. This musical work comprises three different melodies. The first is one that haunted the composer for many years and came to her at moments of deep emotion. The second melody reflects her interest in music of various world cultures, in this case, Australian Aboriginal music. The last melody utilizes the concept of harmonic overtone singing. Harmonic overtone singing allows singing in two different voices simultaneously. It has its roots in Hoomei "throat" singing, which is indigenous to Western Mongolia and the overtone chanting of Tantric Tibetan Buddhism. Who knew that we Minnesotans would be singing Australian music while traveling in Italy?!

We look forward to our tour, and hope also that you look forward to hearing about it in the next newsletter! *Arrivederci!* ➤



St. Mark's Basilica in Venice where the Gustavus Choir members will be performing during their 2003 tour.

Sports News: the Football Spectacular! *by Paul Biederman '03, bass*

So this is usually the article that most altos and basses would rather not read. Many probably pass it over year after year because they already know that it will

read: "Sopranos and Tenors Waltz All over the Altos and Basses Yet Again," or something to that effect. However, the theme of this year's article shall be

"Altos and Basses Make a Joyful Noise," as they beat the tenors and sopranos by a score of many to few!

The now three-time MVB (Most Valuable Bass) Steve Backues ('03) failed to disappoint once again. He had numerous tackles and an interception to cap off his impressive performance. Rumor has it that he has turned down offers from the NFL, opting for a career in chemistry instead.

In all seriousness, the annual football game is an important bonding time for the choir, as a way for new members to get to know everyone in a non-choir setting. Almost everyone who was there had a great time, regardless of section, even though the loss left some with hurt feelings. Last year we added a softball game in the spring, and this year we are adding a broomball game. Within a few years, we might be playing games more often than we sing. But hey, it's fun! ➤



The Altos and Basses—Victory at last!

Christmas in Christ Chapel Features Traditional Swedish Hymns

by *Allison Hawley '03, alto*

Although Christmas in Christ Chapel services of the past few years have ranged from quite traditional (last year's "Celtic Pilgrimage") to thought-provoking (year 2000's "Heaven and Nature Sing") to downright unexpected (1999's "Scenes from the Revelation"), the 30th annual Christmas in Christ Chapel swings the College around full circle to face its heritage, in a traditional Swedish prayer and hymn service—*Julbön*.

As always, the heart of Christmas in Christ Chapel rests in the music that students and alumni share together, and *Julbön* is no exception. The Gustavus Choir, along with other music ensembles, is presenting a "hymn collage"—a medley of different traditional Swedish hymns that make up the centerpiece of that country's Christmas celebration—just as our American Christmas carols do for us. Most of the hymns are sung in Swedish, giving the choir a chance to polish foreign language skills for the upcoming Italy tour...is Swedish spoken in Italy?

At the center of the Gustavus Choir repertoire for *Julbön*, however, is a piece performed in English—"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming." Although originally a German folk song, the setting to be performed in Christmas in Christ Chapel is by Swedish composer Jan Sandström. Coincidentally, the Gustavus Choir performed it two years ago at the 2000 Christmas in Christ Chapel celebration, "Heaven and Nature Sing." Since the piece was recommended by nearly every Swedish music director consulted, and since it was so popular with audience members two years ago, the Gustavus Choir will be performing it again.

Please join us in celebrating Christmas in the true Gustavus Choir manner—could you really stand to miss out on the beautiful music, the heartfelt prayers, and "O Come, All Ye Faithful"? ➤

Tentative Touring Plans for the Years Ahead

- 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
- 2007** – International Tour
Scandinavia or South
America

***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. ➤***