

Winston-Salem Girls Chorus (WSGC):

A multi-leveled, community-based choir organization for girl singers in grades 2 - 12 in Winston-Salem and surrounding areas. WSGC is a partner with the Music and Arts Ministries of Centenary United Methodist Church.

Founder, Managing Artistic Director & Conductor
 Anne M. Saxon

Collaborative Pianist
 Cynthia Saylor

Assistant Director
 Suzanne Maggs

Administrator
 Katie Bills

Parent Board Co-Presidents
 Darby Graves
 Beverly Rowland

UPBEAT! Representative
 Hayden Barnes

Lyrica Representative
 Gary Haning

Encore Representative
 Cassandra Brunson

Uniform Chairperson
 Judith Arnolda

Webmaster
 Shawn Martin

Director of CUMC Music & the Arts Ministries
 Jonathan Emmons

CUMC Music & the Arts Ministries Team Leader
 Ellen Moore

Keeping the Music Alive



In March of 2020 when the Covid19 Pandemic swept through and spread like wildfire, our rehearsal space was shut down for what was to be two weeks. Little did we know that it would remain shutdown indefinitely and over a year later we would just begin rehearsing together in person - with full pandemic safety protocols - in a city picnic shelter. It's not much, but at least it is SOMETHING!

Last March as all of this began sinking in and schools went into a remote learning mode we quietly began meeting remotely as well, planning to "ride it out" for a few more weeks. We dreamed of soon going back to in-person rehearsals to keep our repertoire fresh and polish it for a glorious final season concert event, complete with annual awards and reception in early May. *Then it became apparent this would not be happening for a very, very, long time.*

So we went into different mode of awards, mailing out participation certificates, hand-delivering trophies and special roses in front yards, and arranged a "drive-by" celebration for our high school senior. We extended the season a few weeks then finally had to finish with an online celebration event with slide shows and videos.

Our big tour to the Crescent City Children's Choir Festival in New Orleans in June was cancelled, Summer Sing Day-Camp didn't happen in August, and we were faced with starting a new season with virtual auditions and more virtual rehearsals. This was all done with no small amount of **freaking out about EVERYTHING just like every other performing arts organization on the entire planet!** After checking in with friends and colleagues in the children's choir community for support encouragement, we began to think differently:



(continued on page 2)



UPBEAT!

2nd - 4th Grades



Lyrca
4th - 8th Grades

Encore

Advanced Choir
8 - 12th Grades

Keeping the Music Alive *(continued from page 1)*

instead of what we can't do, what CAN we do???

Our Parent Board met early last May and deemed that **our bonds are greater than just the act of singing together**, and decided that we needed to remain connected and focus on social-emotional learning aspects to keep supporting our singers. Therefore our 2020-2021 Season began last September with great anticipation, keeping the following goals in mind:



- To provide a place for our singers to experience fun and joy and share their love of singing and music with other like-minded girls and young women.
- Staying connected with our singers, both individually, and as a group. *Connection is key.*
- To develop our singers' musicianship skills to a much higher level than what we are normally able to do in a performance-based setting.
- Connect with others outside of our own choir, creating an even greater sense of community.
- Be set-up and ready once we ARE able to meet together in-person!

WSGC has been doing this all season long, meeting weekly in a virtual format, having a few combined chorus online socials along the way, and producing three "Virtual Choir Videos" to share with others through social media. And now, finally, we are starting back in person in a city covered picnic shelter until Centenary UMC opens back up. It will still be quite awhile until we won't need to wear a singer mask and follow COVID19 Safety protocols, **BUT THAT'S OKAY**. In the meantime we are now making music together and looking forward to even brighter days ahead. —Anne

Help us Keep the Music Alive!

We need your financial contributions to help support our organization and "Keep the Music Alive"!

This past year has truly been a season of "grace" in multiple ways. It has been challenging to retain and recruit singers and to host our usual fundraising events.

- In May of 2020 we applied for, and were awarded, a Paycheck Protection Plan. Combined with reimbursements from our cancelled summer tour to New Orleans we were able to begin the season last fall and move forward in good fashion. *We have also applied for a second PPP this spring.*
- To assist those financially affected by the pandemic, and to have enough singers to make our choirs viable, singer tuition for online learning has been HALF-PRICE since last September. In addition, we were able to award more partial tuition scholarships than normal to **help keep these girls singing**.
- We have been extremely fortunate to cover our expenses up until now, but our coffers have greatly dwindled. Can you help us with a donation? Each and every dollar makes a huge difference to continue to offer scholarship funds and empower more girls to be able to sing.
- We are a 501(c)(3) organization so your contribution is tax-deductible.

Please know how much we appreciate your donation!

- ◆ Paypal: Winston-Salem Girls Chorus
- ◆ Venmo: Winston-Salem-Girls-Chorus
- ◆ Or you can make out your check to "WSGC" and mail to:
WSGC, 4105 Sewanee Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106

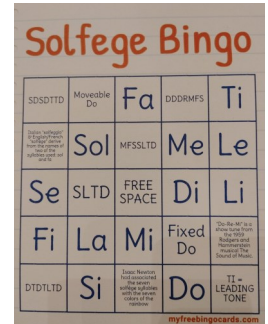
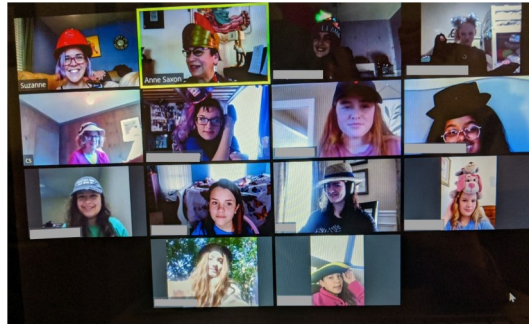
~ Empowering Girls Through Song ~

A Year of Virtual Choir



When the pandemic began last year and it was not safe to sing together in person, we started meeting virtually on Zoom each week and did as much as possible to stay connected and keep our singers engaged. There was no way to sing together simultaneously, so we had to be creative and resourceful, “building our ship” each week as we worked to keep our music and connection alive.

We implemented different ways of engagement with things like “hat day”, a masked singer event, creating choir memes, and playing games, such as Solfege Bingo. Since September we have distributed choir materials on 3 different occasions with things needed at home to use while in rehearsal. These included copies of the music, solfege and musicianship materials, and things for Dalcroze creative movement, such as scarves and racket balls.



Last fall we had an online Luau with singers and families from all three choirs. We enjoyed viewing video highlights from our 2002 tour to Hawaii while wearing leis, learning to dance the hula, and playing online games. **One family even donated a fresh pineapple to each of our singers!** ♥

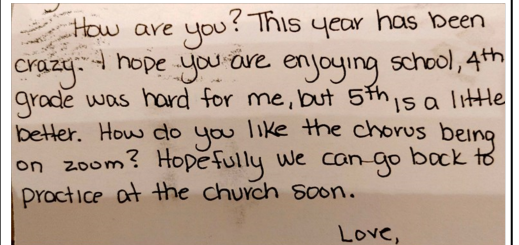
Staying Connected while Being Apart



Composer & Conductor Tom Shelton of Westminster Choir College.

WSGC Choir Sister Postcard Project:

Each of our choirs has written notes to their choir sisters over the course of several months to stay connect with one another.



Virtual Choir Video Projects

We recorded and produced 3 “virtual choir” videos this season to stay connected with our audiences, and help share beautiful music and positive messages with others on social media. Each singer recorded themselves singing to submit, and Anne Saxon did the audio and video engineering to produce the videos. → **Check us out on YouTube!**



Violinist Charles Shafer



Composer & Conductor J. Reese Norris

Guest Artists

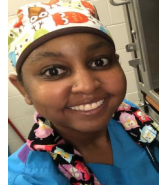
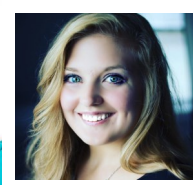
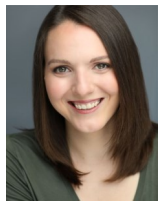
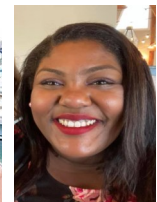
We have been very fortunate to have special guests join us throughout the year while we have been virtual. These include fantastic musical artists who shared their passion for music, and imparted sound advice about their journey as singers and musicians.



Maestra D'Walla Simmons-Burke from Winston-Salem State University

Online Visits from our Former Singers: It was a special treat to host online visits with chorus alums to gain insight and inspiration! Here are a few, pictured right, clockwise:

- **Tiffany B. Ashton:** Grammy voter, HMMA Best Country Winner, & Renegade Radio Nashville New Face of Country 2019
- **Nikkia Young:** Vocalist & Supporter of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra
- **Staci Jo Johnston:** Actress & Musical Theater Performer, New York City
- **Charity Hampton:** 2016 National Blind Idol Competition Winner
- **Dr. Caryn Alexis Greco:** Soprano, Executive Director/Opera Singer at Steel City Opera & Adjunct Professor at Point Park University
- **Crystal Cain,** Dr. of Veterinary Medicine





Winston-Salem Girls Chorus
2021 Spring & Summer Schedule

April 2:

2021-2022 Season Interviews & Auditions for new singers open, Grades 2 - 12
 —Online or In-Person times available
 WSGCSing@aol.com / (336) 922-4073

Monday, June 7

Awards Ceremony & Ending Concert
Centenary UMC; Families Only

August 2 - 6:

Summer Sing! Day-Camp

Sharing Concert: *Friday, August 2, 1:15 pm*

Tuesday, August 27:

2021-2022 Season Begins!



19TH ANNUAL CHOIR DAY-CAMP
FOR SINGERS AGES 8 - 18

Schedule: August 2 - 6

▶ **August 2 - 5: 9:00 - 12:45**

▶ **Friday, August 6: 9:00 - 2:15**

-Includes pizza lunch & a Sharing Concert!

- Held at Centenary UMC
- Following COVID19 Safety Protocols
- More Info: www.wsgirlschorus.org



This past February WSGC enjoyed an online Art Project to celebrate Valentine's Day. Bags filled with art supplies were distributed to singers and Artist Kara Elizabeth led us through this online project. Some of our artwork is pictured below, along with the artist.

Singers and the Artistic Staff also made Valentines and participated in a Valentine Exchange with one another *via* "snail mail". In addition, each singer sent a Valentine to other folks in our organization, including Parent Board members, our auxiliary staff, contributors, and leaders of the Music and Arts Ministries Team at Centenary UMC. We really enjoyed being able to "share some love", especially during the pandemic. ♥♥♥



The mission of the Winston-Salem Girls Chorus is to provide a joyful and empowering experience for girls and young women through vocal music education and artistic excellence in choral music performance.

Celebrating our 22nd season of choral excellence!

Our graded choral program is comprised of singers in 2nd - 12th grades from Winston-Salem and surrounding areas.

Contact Information: (336) 922-4073; WSGC-Sing@aol.com / www.wsgirlschorus.org / Look us up on Facebook!