

Noteworthy

A publication of The Wednesday Morning Music Club (Austin)

Website: musicclubaustin.org

Dec. 19th, 2018



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Greta Gutman

My sister Dolly and I spent our early years in Lockeport, on the South Shore of Nova Scotia, where our father, a family physician, had a typical old-time practice, with many house calls late at night. When I was nine, we immigrated to the U.S. so that he could begin a residency in pathology. After living in several states, we settled in Peoria, IL, where I graduated from high school. Through all of the moving, my parents' first order of business was always to find a piano teacher for Dolly and me. I attended Illinois Wesleyan University, majoring in Sociology and Social Work, and each semester took one hour's credit in piano.

Upon graduating, I became a social worker for the American Red Cross in Chicago, working with servicemen and women and also serving in local and national disasters. Here I met my husband Gus, who was a research chemist, and we moved to St Paul, MN with 3M. We had three children, the eldest of whom has an intellectual disability; this led to years of advocacy and committee work in disability services. Although I was raised in the Protestant church, my family was Jewish, and I was fortunate to add this tradition, including its beautiful music, to my life. For several years I have accompanied the Cantorial Soloist at Congregation Beth Israel for the High Holidays.

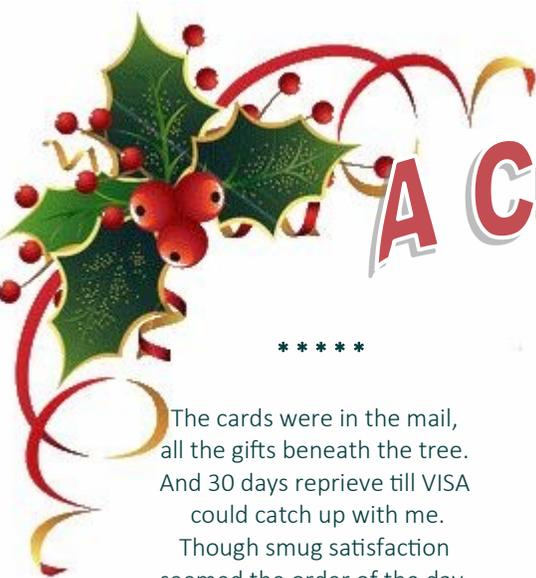
In 1984 our family moved to Austin, TX where 3M was building a new research center, and this is where we stayed. Many of you will remember Gus, who was an enthusiastic member of WMMC after his retirement. We joined WMMC in 1993. Russ Prickett, Marv Frank, Anna Derdeyn, Mary Takvam and I as accompanist formed a quartet known as the Austin Lite Opera Ensemble. We sang opera, Broadway and music of the 30s and 40s at WMMC, at retirement and nursing homes, and for opera in the schools.

When my special-needs daughter, Jennifer, left the school system in 1990, it became evident that she needed to be singing. One parent told me that she had read an article about "Songs That Every American Knows," and she lamented that her son knew none of them. Another told me about her daughter with Downs Syndrome, who had practiced with her high school chorus throughout the spring, but at the final performance was asked to hand out programs. Consequently a few young people with special needs, their non-disabled "buddies" (family members and other volunteers), along with Anna Derdeyn as director and me as accompanist, started singing once a week in a church hall. Some participants could read music; many couldn't, but all have been welcomed.

From perhaps 10 singers we have grown to around 50; at times we have numbered 70 singers. We named ourselves "We Are The Chorus" and later were sponsored by the Armstrong Music School, which provides practice space and obtains grants to pay for expenses. In the fall we present a performance of songs we want to learn; during the holidays we sing Christmas and Chanukah songs for disability groups and nursing homes; in the spring we present a shortened version of a Broadway musical.

In recent days We Are The Chorus has performed for the opening of a city council meeting, where it was proclaimed "We are the Chorus day" in Austin. We sang in the lobby at the Long Center for the dress rehearsal of "The Nutcracker Suite," and we joined the UT Chorus at Bates Recital Hall at their fall concert. You may learn more from our website, wearethechorus.org.

WMMC has offered many opportunities to perform, meet wonderful friends, and listen to a wide variety of music. How fortunate we all are to have it in our lives!



A Cup of Christmas Tea

By Tom Hegg

The cards were in the mail,
all the gifts beneath the tree.
And 30 days reprieve till VISA
could catch up with me.
Though smug satisfaction
seemed the order of the day,
Something still was nagging me
and would not go away.
A week before, I got a letter
from my old great Aunt.
It read: Of course I'll understand
completely if you can't,
But if you find you have some time
how wonderful if we
Could have a little chat and share
a cup of Christmas tea.
She'd had a mild stroke that year
which crippled her left side.
Though house bound now,
my folks had said
it hadn't hurt her pride.
They said: She'd love to see you.
What a nice thing it would be
For you to go and maybe have
a cup of Christmas tea.
But boy! I didn't want to go.

I didn't need to be depressed.
I didn't need the strain.
And what about my brother?
Why not him? She's his aunt, too!
I thought I had it justified,
but then before I knew,
The reasons not to go I so
painstakingly had built
Were cracking wide and crumbling
in an acid rain of guilt.

How I got up to her door
I really couldn't tell...
I watched my hand rise up and press
the button of the bell.
I waited, aided by my nervous
rocking to and fro.
And just as I was thinking
I should turn around and go,
I heard the rattle of the china
in the hutch against the wall.
The triple beat of two feet
and a crutch came down the hall.

Come in! Come in!
She laughed the words.
She took me by the hand.
And all my fears dissolved away
as if by her command.
We went inside and then before
I knew how to react
Before my eyes and ears and nose
was Christmas past, alive, intact!
The scent of candied oranges,
of cinnamon and pine,
The antique wooden soldiers
in their military line,
The porcelain Nativity
I'd always loved so much,
The Dresden and the crystal
I'd been told I mustn't touch.

And here among old Christmas cards
so lovingly displayed,
A special place of honor
for the ones we kids had made.
And there, beside her rocking chair,
the center of it all,
My great Aunt stood and said how nice
it was I'd come to call.

She was still passionately interested
in everything I did.
She was positive. Encouraging.
Like when I was a kid.

We talked about the limitations
that she'd had to face.
She spoke with utter candor
and with humor and good grace.
Then defying the reality
of crutch and straightened knee,
On wings of hospitality
she flew to brew the tea.
I sat alone with feelings that
I hadn't felt in years.
I looked around at Christmas
through a thick hot blur of tears.
And the candles and the holly
she'd arranged on every shelf,
The impossibly good cookies
she still somehow baked herself.
But these rich and tactile memories
became quite pale and thin,
When measured by the Christmas
my great Aunt kept deep within.
Her body halved and nearly spent,
but my great Aunt was whole.
I saw a Christmas miracle,
the triumph of a soul.
The triple beat of two feet and a
crutch came down the hall,
The rattle of the china
in the hutch against the wall.
She poured two cups. She smiled and then
she handed one to me.
And then we settled back and had
a cup of Christmas tea.

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President's Message

Janie Keys

"Joyful, Joyful". The December 5th program began with these words, sung in unison to Beethoven's beloved melody from the last movement of his ninth symphony. The inspired lyrics of this hymn were written in 1907 by Henry van Dyke, American author (short stories and poetry), educator, and clergyman. The lyrics were first published in 1911 in van

Dyke's *Book of Poems*. He wrote of this poem: "These verses are simple expressions of desires in this present time--hymns of today that may be sung together by people who know the thought of the age, and are not afraid that any truth of science will destroy religion, or any revolution on earth overthrow the kingdom of heaven. Therefore this is a hymn of trust and joy and hope." Born in 1852 in Germantown, Pennsylvania, he graduated from Princeton University in 1873 and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1877. He served as a professor of English Literature at Princeton between 1899 and 1923. Later in life, he described himself as a "meliorist" (someone who believes that the world may be made better by human effort) and was "trying to do my bit to help and wishing that it were more." Van Dyke's words are relevant today.

Our program provided those moments of joy that, in the words of van Dyke, "lead us sunward" beginning with selections from Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words and ending with the Prelude from a Bach solo Cello Suite. (Many thanks to Terri Freeland for filling in.) Those of you who lingered after the meeting heard Kay Race go to the piano and play a Brahms Intermezzo. It was beautiful. Like the great aunt, bent with age, who keeps Christmas alive and vibrant within her in the poem above, so one of our oldest members facing the same challenges of old age keeps music alive and vibrant within her. It was indeed a beautiful moment.

Come one, come all, and come early! A message from hospitality co-chair Elizabeth Lerner: **Come early on December 19th for the annual WMMC Holiday Coffee beginning at 9:30.** You are invited to bring a sweet or savory treat to share with your fellow club members. No leftovers! Bring a container to take some treats home with you after our meeting. Christmas music will be provided by Carol Koock.

And after the coffee, the treats will all be musical. Hope to see you there.



Thought of the Day

Quotes from George H. W. Bush (1924 - 2018)

"Be bold in your caring, be bold in your dreaming and above all else, always do your best."

"We are a nation of communities... a brilliant diversity spread like stars, like a thousand points of light in a broad and peaceful sky."

"No problem of human making is too great to be overcome by human ingenuity, human energy, and the untiring hope of the human spirit."

ABOUT OUR PERFORMERS

Felicity Coltman, piano

Felicity Coltman is Founder and Artistic Director Emeritus of the Austin Chamber Music Center. Born in South Africa, she holds diplomas from the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity College of Music in London, the University of South Africa, and a degree from the University of Kansas. Felicity received the Gruber Award for Excellence in Chamber Music Teaching from Chamber Music America and the B. Iden Payne Performing Arts Award. In 2004 she was inducted into the Austin Arts Hall of Fame. For many years, Felicity has taught piano, theory and chamber music to students of all ages. Today she remains active as teacher, performer, judge, and consultant. She is also a certified yoga teacher.

Carolyn McColloch, piano

Carolyn graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education from West Virginia University with prior study at Mason College of Music in Charleston, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, and U. of Michigan Interlochen. She continued to study as she performed and taught in Oklahoma City, Denver, Midland, Kingwood, Houston, and Katy. She loved teaching. Now she is performing and sharing her love of music!

Maxine Gomes, piano

Maxine Gomes earned piano performance degrees from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston and New York University where she received her Ph.D. She pursued a dual career in New York for many years as a music teacher and solo pianist giving numerous recitals and FM radio broadcasts on Long Island and New York City. After earning a Professional Diploma in Administration, Maxine took a hiatus from music and had a career in school administration on Long Island, New York. Maxine, again, is enjoying performing in the metropolitan Austin area.

Charles Palmer, baritone

Charles Palmer is a native Austinite, former Peace Corps volunteer, and retired government employee. He holds BA and MA degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and a PhD in Latin American geography from The University of Florida. He has lived in Bolivia, Colombia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Charles' musical experience includes singing in church choirs and in several of Austin's civic choruses. He studies voices with Professor David Small of the University of Texas Butler School of Music and performs regularly with his pianist friend and colleague Kathryn Govier at retirement homes and similar venues in the Austin area.

Kathryn Govier, piano

I started music lessons at age 4 and "cut my eye-teeth on Bach." I was lucky to have a piano teacher who stressed the classics. I earned a Bachelor of Music, piano major (1971), and I've used my skills as accompanist and collaborator, as well as soloist. I work with Charles Palmer through the Butler School of Music Outreach program giving retirement home programs. My profession was teacher of the handicapped. I spent 3 years in Marrakesh, Morocco, working with handicapped children as Peace Corps Volunteer (1987-1990). I love living in Austin with many wonderful cultural events to attend and participate in.

Timothy Woolsey, piano

Timothy Woolsey is Professor of Piano Emeritus at Texas State University where he taught from 1975-2010. He taught adjunct at the University of Texas in 2015-2016, and he still teaches privately at home. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from UT Austin where he studied with John Perry.

Music Factoid :

The longest piano piece of any kind is *Vexations* by Erik Satie.

It consists of a 180-note composition which, on the composer's orders, must be repeated 840 times so that the whole performance is 18 hours 40 minutes.

Its first reported public performance in September 1963, in the Pocket Theater, New York City, required a relay team of 10 pianists. The New York Times critic fell asleep at 4 a.m. and the audience dwindled to 6 masochists.

At the conclusion, one sado-masochist shouted "Encore!"

Events Calendar



Conspirare Youth Choirs – conspirare.org

Dec. 14, 7:30 PM - St Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 15th St.

Dec. 15, 7:30 PM - St Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 15th St

Songs of Ice and Fire.

This concert is built on themes of ice and snow, anchored on a five movement work by Sarah Quartel.

Chorus Austin – chorusaustin.org

Dec. 15, 3:00 PM—St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, 8134 Mesa Drive

On a Winter's Eve.

The ensembles of Chorus Austin will be joined by the Austin Children's Choir for this family-friendly concert of carols and sing-alongs. The program features a newly commissioned work from Diane White-Clayton to honor the memory of Reuben McDaniel, celebrated professor at the University of Texas McCombs School of Business and former board chair of Chorus Austin.

Austin Symphony – austinsymphony.org

Dec. 29-30, 8:00 PM – Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road

Ella & Louis.

Trumpet virtuoso Byron Stripling and jazz vocalist Carmen Bradford will light up the stage as they take you on a journey through the most famous duets and solos recorded by two of jazz's greatest legends. Byron and Carmen are a musical reincarnation of Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald. Featuring hits of the Great American Songbook, they recreate one of the most memorable collaborations in music history while entertaining and capturing everyone's heart along the way. Bring your favorite food dish and enjoy this concert in a cabaret-style setting.

La Follia Austin Baroque – lafollia.org

Jan. 5, 7:00 PM - Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue

Jan. 6, 3:00 PM - Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue

A World Tour of Orchestral Music.

A 21-piece baroque orchestra performs Handel's *Royal Fireworks Music*, Bach's *Orchestral Suite No. 3*, a concerto from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Charpentier's *Te Deum*, and others.

Gilbert and Sullivan Society - gilbertsullivan.org

Jan. 6, 2:00 PM – Genesis Presbyterian Fellowship Hall, 1507 Wilshire Blvd.

Audience singing led by multi-talented and charismatic Wand'ring Minstrels director, Robert Schneider. Selections from *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *H.M.S. Pinafore* and our upcoming summer grand production of *Iolanthe*. FREE

Austin Symphony - austinsymphony.org

Jan. 11-12, 8:00 PM – Dell Hall, The Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Drive

Variation Voyage.

Program: *Variations on "America"* by Charles Ives; *Symphonic Variations* by Antonin Dvořák; *Symphonic Variations, FWV 46* by César Franck; *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell, Op. 34* by Benjamin Britten. Legendary pianist Leon Fleisher joins the symphony in performing César Franck's *Symphonic Variations*.

Conspirare – conspirare.org - (Youth Choir)

Jan. 18-19, 8:00 PM – St Martin's Lutheran Church, 606 W. 15th St.

Hope of Loving.

The beautiful, socially conscious choral works of Jake Runestad take center stage for this January concert series and Conspirare's next recording. Runestad's commitment to musically potent and well crafted compositions aligns with current cultural questions about race, gender, orientation, and psychological challenges related to suicide and gun violence.

Austin Chamber Music – austinchambermusic.org

Jan. 19, 7:30 PM - First Unitarian Church, 4700 Grover Avenue

It's All Greek to Me.

Program: *Violin Sonata in G Minor* by Giuseppe Tartini; *Cinq mélodies populaires grecques* by Maurice Ravel; *Piano Trio in E-flat Major, Op. 1., No. 1* by Beethoven; *Constantinople: III. Odd World* by Christos Hatzis. Featuring Sonja Larson, violin; Nora Karakousoglou, cello; and Michelle Schumann, piano.

Austin Chamber Ensemble – austinchamberensemble.org

Jan. 19, 7:30 PM - First Presbyterian Church, 8001 Mesa Drive

Lone Wild Wolf.

Pianist Patryce King presents a program titled *Lone Wild Wolf* to highlight the Full Moon of January 2019. Martha Mortensen Ahern will join Ms. King in performing the Poulenc *Sonata for Four Hands*. Expect to hear a mostly solo piano program featuring the wild side of Beethoven, Ginastera, and more.

Austin Baroque Orchestra - austinbaroqueorchestra.org

Jan. 19, 7:30 PM – Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2111 Alexander Avenue

Just in time for Carnival season, here's a chamber program made up of early baroque works from Venice and northern Italy. Often seen as a reaction against the controlled restraint of the late Renaissance, music in 17th-century Italy changed drastically, and the expressivity and emotional frankness of the music of Monteverdi and his contemporaries can be arresting, even today. Works by Monteverdi, Merula, Uccellini, Strozzi, Bertoli, and others, performed by a small ensemble including violin, recorder, cello, dulcian, harp, and theorbo.

Ensemble VIII – ensembleviii.org

Jan. 24, 7:30 PM - Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, 7127 Bee Caves Road

Jan. 25, 7:30 PM - St. Louis Catholic Church Chapel, 7601 Burnet Road

Sacred and Profane: A German's Italianate Songs of Life and Love.

From the 16th to 18th centuries, eager composers from Germany and France would journey from their native lands to Venice and Rome to study with the great Italian masters. Credited with solidifying the Italian practice within a uniquely German style, Heinrich Schütz's *Cantiones Sacre* and *Italian Madrigals* collections are masterpieces of harmonic genius and thrilling vocal sonority.

<http://music.utexas.edu/> - **check all events online**

Editors: Marie White, Carolyn McCulloch, Marcia Edwards