



# NOTES

Vol. 3, No. 1, Fall 1982

## AMERICAN BOYCHOIR SCHOOL OPENS WITH TEN-YEAR HIGH ENROLLMENT

The American Boychoir School has long been acclaimed for its exceptional choirs. In its 45th year, with an enrollment of 56 students representing 11 states and Canada, the School's academic program is attracting wide recognition for the unique and outstanding education it provides boys in grades 3-8.

Headmaster Stephen N. Howard, beginning his 6th year, cites as indicators "the continued increase in enrollment, more students being accepted at top secondary schools, and the glowing reports of our graduates' exceptional academic preparation."

Mr. Howard explains, "I believe the dual enrichment of music and academics combined with the high standards of excellence demanded of the students, give a young boy one of the rarest educational experiences in the United States."

Five full time and four part-time academic teachers, as well as a musical staff

*"one of the rarest educational experiences in the United States"*

of three, make up the academic staff. The high ratio of teacher to student assures the advantages of individual attention and small classes. The 3rd and 4th grades of The American Boychoir School provide basic skills in the academic curriculum and offer preparatory techniques and theory in the music program. For both 5th and 6th graders, who comprise the Apprentice Choir, and 7th and 8th graders, from which the Concert Choir is drawn,



curriculum is comparable to the best private schools.

Phyllis Furley, Academic Director, (see Profile), points out, "In addition to the usual curriculum private schools offer, the Boychoir School's music and music theory courses enrich our already challenging program. For instance," she elaborated, "music theory, the language of music, is like learning another foreign language."

Acting as a coordinating figure, Mrs. Furley encourages the interdisciplinary exchange of literature, history, history of art, science, language, and music in and out of the classroom. "The languages the boys use in their singing (English, French, Latin, and German) carry over to their classes." She noted, "This year we have an outstanding native German and graduate of the

University of Heidelberg teaching the 5-8's German.

"Recently when the 7th grade was studying World War II with their history

*"music theory is like learning a foreign language"*

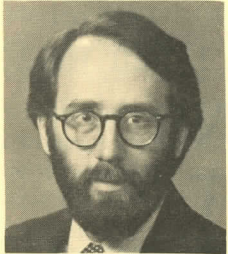
teacher, the 7th grade English class was reading *The Diary of Anne Frank*. This combining, or coordinating is particularly effective because of our small classes. It is put to great use when the Concert Choir is on tour or when there are worthwhile events occurring here in Princeton.

"An example of our use of local resource materials is the outdoor sculpture at Princeton University which we will visit before the Washington tour and our trip to the Hirschorn Museum."

*cont'd on page 6*

# NOTES FROM THE LIBRARY

## The Headmaster's Column



Stephen N.  
Howard

### Small School, Big Message

Can a private school of 56 students add something meaningful to a national debate? I believe it can.

A great virtue of American education is its variety. Largest by far, of course, is the public education system, which despite its problems ought to be a continuing and vigorous source of national pride to us all.

But we also boast a healthy and diverse system of private schools—non-sectarian and religious, boarding and day, liberal and conservative, for the academically gifted and for the learning disabled.

By its very existence, this great variety of schools and philosophies fuel a continuing, lively and important debate about the right purposes and appropriate content of education. Americans talk about education more than other people. Because “a good education” is an important part of our national identity, we feel more strongly about it than other people. And frequently when we feel especially strongly, small groups of Americans are likely to start up their own small schools just to prove a point.

So frequently small schools do have something they want to say. When their message is strong, their voices are heard.

The American Boychoir School has a strong voice—the choir—and a platform—its concert appearances. I think we have two kinds of things to say. First, we offer reminders or illustrations of basic truths that frequently get lost amidst all the shouting. Second, we offer some

perspectives that may be new to many people.

Among the basic truths are these:

- That most children enjoy challenge if it is reasonable, fair and within reach.
- That children respond to high expectations. Too often our schools settle for second-best, for the mediocre.
- That “discipline” does not have to stunt creativity and expression, but rather enhances and releases it. Discipline, as any thoughtful person can see, is not the same as repression.
- That given the chance and the right milieu, children want to do well, and will.
- That given something they want to do, children can work far harder, and enjoy it, than we believe possible.

For many people, these further points may be a real insight:

- That music, at once a foreign and universal language, requires as much or more discipline than other strictly

“academic” courses.

- That high achievement in music is possible without sacrificing the 3 R's.
- That unexceptional children are capable of astonishingly high achievement.

For music teachers everywhere—if for no one else—these illustrations can give encouragement and the will to do battle when every budgetary pressure in schools—public and private alike—is to cut the music program when things are tight.

But for the rest of us, too, the message is important. Other things are as important as the so-called basics, and if treated that way would produce better, more versatile and more humane students, graduates and citizens.

Most issues of *NOTES* have emphasized the musical and performing side of The American Boychoir School. I hope this issue will offer an insight into all the other, equally important, things that we do.

## Alumni News

### OF FROGS AND KLEENEX...

*G. James Sammarco*, M.D., F.A.C.S. ('54) shared by mail a few memories of some of his Columbus Boychoir classmates, including his old roommate, *Allen Schwartz*, whom he saw at Chautauqua this past summer. “I have fond memories of Allen, but the memory which I remember most distinctly is when he was sick with the flu and spent the better part of three days filling several waste baskets with Kleenex tissues...it was he who introduced me to the giant sized Kleenex.”

Regarding *Bob Kendall's* ('53) comment about frog hunting (*NOTES*, Vol. 2, No. 3), Jim writes, “You will be interested to know that the most experienced frog gigger of that august period, the early fifties, was *Warren Elliott* ('54). Warren had a deal with Donald Bryant [then accompanist, and later, Music Director from 1954-68] for fifty cents a pair of frog legs and kept him in good supply.”

*Frederick Royal*, who taught at the Boychoir School during the 1950's, wrote us recently to share the following news of some of his former students: “*John Motsinger* ('61) now a senior at Wake

Forest and doing very well...*Peter Kirwin* ('61) a computer expert and harpsichord player...*Steve Hornberger* ('59) back in South America as Associate Director for Evaluation & Administration for the Andean Rural Health Project in Bolivia. His wife and two children are with him.”

Other alumni news: **FROM THE 40'S** — *Dr. John W. Barr* stopped by and told us, “Quite different from Broad Street Presbyterian Church [Columbus Boychoir first home in Ohio] and *terrific!*”...

**FROM THE 50'S**—*David Nolte* ('58) dropped by for a visit this summer; he now lives in Iowa...*Don McLean* ('58) also spent some time visiting the School. Don continues his administrative duties

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## NOTES

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## Looking For A Holiday Gift Idea?

How about a record! The American Boychoir School has the following records available for sale\* (while supplies last):

by **The Columbus Boychoir** —

- Singing for the Joy of It † ca. 1960  
(secular and folk music)
- Joy to the World † 1962
- The Columbus Boychoir † 1966  
(sacred and secular music)
- ...At Spoleto 1974

- Evensong for the Christmas Season 1974
- Songs of Zoltan Kodaly 1975
- In Concert at Princeton 1979  
(sacred and secular music)

by **The American Boychoir** —

- Messiah ‡ 1981

\*All records \$7.00 plus \$1.00 postage except where indicated. Checks payable to The American Boychoir School.

† \$50.00 plus \$1.00 postage

‡ \$24.95 plus \$1.00 postage

## Concert Schedule

Canada Tour:

- November 28 – Lenoxville, Quebec  
Bishops University
- November 29 – Rimouski, Quebec  
Salle Georges Beaulieu
- December 3 – Cambridge, Ontario  
St. James Cathedral
- December 6 – Cambridge, Ontario  
St. Andrews Presbyterian
- December 12 – Trenton, NJ  
Trinity Cathedral  
(Christmas Concert)
- December 18 – Princeton, NJ  
Alexander Hall  
(Christmas Concert)

# From the Loggia

John Kuzma,  
Music Director



My wife and I recently had house guests from California who visited the Boychoir as a part of a trip East as delegates to The National Conference on Dyslexia. My friends are seasoned educators, professionals who were very eager to see The American Boychoir School from that perspective as well as from the perspective of friends.

The richness of talent in our academic staff and the penetrating nature of the classroom work they observed greatly impressed them, especially given the monastic, rigorous surroundings they

saw in classrooms and dormitories.

Whenever the choir sings, we talk beforehand about the kind of attitude necessary for great achievement. A superlative performance must be born out of the humble quality of the everyday, disciplined life which the boys live and know. Whatever we may wish we had in the nature of material things at the Boychoir School, we have something of what Charles Ives called the "real stuff of creativity" in the authentic understanding and intense personal dedication of our academic staff. Their respect for ideas, for enduring values, and their insight into humanistic education permeates the spirit of our choir.

It is nice to have guests notice these things, and a very hopeful thing to work with the boys and teachers at the Boychoir School.

*cont'd. from page 2*

for the Friends of Music at Guilford in Brattleboro, VT... **FROM THE 60'S**—*Tom Dick* ('61) sells title insurance and lives in Norristown, PA...*Andy Nash* ('69) was another of our summer visitors; he's a computer programmer in Toronto...*Charles Zebley's* ('69) dad wrote to tell us that Charles was a guest artist at the Third Festival of Historical Music, held in Malaga, Spain. Charles is a Baroque Flutist...**FROM THE 70'S**—*Zan Harvey* ('70) spent the summer at the Boychoir School's camp, "Albemarle," as a counselor...and speaking of "Albemarle," Camp and Music Director *Anton Armstrong* ('71) tells us his roommate, *Ron Miller* ('71), has just been ordained and is now pastor of St. James Lutheran

Church in Jersey Shore, PA...*Don Ely*, who attended the Boychoir School as a fourth grader in '71, reports his February '82 marriage to Wendy Hoff. Don and Wendy are residing in Conshohocken, PA where Don is an art director for a political printing firm...*John Ruffley* ('72) has been hard at work on a history of Albemarle, the Gerard B. Lambert mansion which has housed the Boychoir since 1950. John asks his fellow alumni for their help in sending him pictures from the 50's and 60's. "This would allow me to fill out stories regarding lifestyle during that time...I also would be interested in any recollections [from those who] were part of the choir that was transferred from Columbus to

*cont'd. on page 6*



RECOGNIZE YOURSELF? If you are one of the members of the choir pictured here, let us know—and tell us what you're up to now!

## Profile:

### Phyllis Furley

Academic Director



#### "To teach the love of a subject"

London-born Phyllis Furley, Academic Director of The American Boychoir School, radiates her love and enthusiasm for children and teaching in a one-to-one encounter with a student, in the classroom, in staff and school meetings, or in private conversation.

Mrs. Furley came to The American Boychoir School as an English teacher in February, 1980. Her outstanding abilities were quickly evident and by June, 1981, she was appointed Academic Director. Mrs. Furley had previously taught for 10 years at Miss Mason's, a renowned and prestigious elementary school in Princeton, as well as a year and a half in the middle and upper schools of Stuart Country Day, a Sacred Heart private K-12 school, also in Princeton.

As a child, Mrs. Furley attended The North London Collegiate School, the first day school planned to give girls an education that, in Mrs. Furley's words, "was equal in quality to that of boys. It was a school for girls, not ladies."

A school girl at the onset of World War II, upon graduation in 1942 Mrs. Furley enlisted in the Auxiliary Territorial Service. She began her 3½ year assignment as a wireless operator, where, she recalled, "I intercepted enemy messages." Mrs. Furley was then transferred to the Education Corps. "My responsibilities were not unlike here. I taught boys ages 14-16, in Ayr, a small town on the Scottish coast."

After the war, Mrs. Furley busied herself with marriage, 2 years in Egypt, 6 months in Cyprus, and raising 4 children.

*cont'd. on page 6*

Music Director John Kuzma marvels at the close ties the academic staff maintains with himself and his staff. "An effort is continuously made to relate our musical repertoire to, for example, social studies and literature. Recently we were working on the music from

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**King David - in music and in literature**

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Honegger's King David — the boys had simultaneously learned the story in their literature class."

Self-discipline, which is essential to becoming a choirboy, is basic to a student's development and academic success at The American Boychoir School. Students must learn to apply themselves and master material which may not be of immediate interest to them. This self-discipline, a basic philosophy of Mrs. Furley's, is, in her words, "an essential tool for the more important purpose of education—to learn and to love learning."

Mrs. Furley sees the students at The American Boychoir School living it every day in learning and practicing their music, and then meeting their

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*"Self-discipline is an essential tool for the more important purpose of education - to learn and to love learning"*

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successes. "The carryover to the academic side," she stressed, "is, of

course, applicable to the student."

Mrs. Furley sees the teachers providing the student with a 'rounded education.' "By the time a boy goes 'on tour,' he is ready," she explained, "to absorb the cultural, social, and educational experiences he is exposed to."

On tour the boys are accompanied by a tutor, lessons are planned around the history, literature, and geography of places they visit, and routine work is maintained in their other subjects.

"All the boys mention the touring as the greatest experience at The Boychoir School," Mrs. Furley noted. "They enjoy succeeding as choristers and representatives of their school. Students here have the unusual opportunity in their education to see their teachers interested in them as individuals and education as purposeful," concluded Mrs. Furley.

Contrary to some impressions, The American Boychoir School provides not simply training in a narrow spe-

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**Touring - the greatest experience at The Boychoir School.**

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cialty, but rather, a broad academic and personal schooling that serves each boy no matter what his future plans. Boychoir graduates are currently attending private schools including Lawrenceville, Groton, Exeter, Kent, Stowe (England), The Hill, St. Andrew's Wilmington, and Germantown Academy.

1967 found her beginning a second marriage to David Furley, an Englishman and Professor of Classics at Princeton University. By 1980, Mrs. Furley had earned her long postponed B.A. from S.U.N.Y. College and her M.A. from Kean College.

Asked what she felt was so special about The American Boychoir School, Mrs. Furley replied, "The close contact with the children. The small groups that provide the chance to teach the love o subject and arouse enthusiasm for a subject...And the strong interdisciplinary atmosphere amongst the teachers is wonderful."

The Furleys live in Ringoes, in a country setting in the Amwell Valley. Their interests include the outdoor life, reading, play readings, travel, and concerts.

Mrs. Furley's background and experience bring exceptional depth and humanity to The American Boychoir School. We are enriched by her presence.

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**ALUMNI NEWS** cont'd from page 5

Princeton." Send your stories and pictures to John c/o the School...*Todd Root*, who spent two years at the School during the mid 70's, returned for a visit this summer...*John Applegate* ('79) is looking at colleges these days and tells us he's still singing in a choir...**FROM THE 80'S**—working with Anton Armstrong and Zan Harvey at Albemarle summer camp this year were *Chris Rowe* ('80) and *Ernie Mathews* ('81). Ernie's brother, Brent, is a 4th grader at the School this fall.

**The American Boychoir School**

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