

reprise

April 2018 Newsletter of the Alumni of The Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale

Welcome ... a message from the Artistic Director



50 years. You'll be hearing from us over the next few months as we get ready for some exciting events – culminating with the Gala event and the 50th anniversary concert (with you guys joining us on stage) on June 23 and June 24. But this season is just the beginning!

Hello PBCC alumni! It makes me so proud when an alumnus stops by the building to say “hi” and to tell us how much PBCC affected his life and helped shape who he is today. To be in this position where I can have a positive impact on boys’ lives, and then get to see them years later when they come back to thank me – it is such a privilege that I cherish. And having been through the program as a boy myself, under Dr. Hamilton’s direction, I also love to hear the stories of other alumni who sang under “H”, and how his direction impacted their lives.

Unfortunately, our small staff has not been able to spend the time needed to connect with alumni over the past decade or so. We love connecting when we can, but we haven’t been pro-active enough in making it happen. Well, that’s all about to change. Judy Houdeshel, the mom of a recent choir alum, has volunteered to take on the much-needed role of Director of Engagement & Alumni Relations. Spearheaded by Judy, with help from PBCC alum Andy Cohen and others, we’ve got a team that is actively working on ways to involve you all in the future of PBCC. You are the foundation of the organization, and as we’re in our 50th season now, we want you to take us through the next

To start it all off, here’s our first official PBCC alumni newsletter. You’ll find highlights of events to come, as well as what we’ve been up to so far this season. First up – the ALUMNI CABARET on April 21st. I’ve contacted several alumni that have gone on to become professional performers – singers, dancers, instrumentalists. I’m proud to say there was a long list, and many more that are currently studying for a performing career. If you are performing and I didn’t contact you, I’m very sorry – I tried to get as much updated info as I could; but let me know...maybe this is something we can do again in the future!

I’m really looking forward to catching up with those of you I haven’t seen lately, and I’m sure many other alumni are looking forward to it as well! Read on, mark the dates on your calendar, and we’ll see you soon!

Then and Now ... Still touring after all these years



1968 - Mexico City, Mexico



1978 - San Francisco



1988 - Dublin, Ireland

The Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale
1336 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123

Reaching out ... meet the Director of Engagement & Alumni Relations

As the parent of an alum and the wife of a chorale member, I feel strongly about the importance of the choir, not only for the boys currently involved, but also for the entire extended choir family who have benefited from the PBCC experience for over 50 years! Think about that – 50 years of lives changed by music and camaraderie! After retiring from being a music educator, I had extra time to devote to PBCC and volunteered as a way of paying it forward for all the choir has meant to my family. Serving as an active wardrobe parent helped me learn more about the importance of getting to know the individuals who sing in the choir and realize the strength of engaging families both past and present into the pride, tradition, and mission of our choir. Now my focus has changed to you. Our Alumni, diverse and of all ages, are spread



Judy, Chris and Steve Houdeshel

throughout the world and yet you all have one thing in common – you earned that red blazer (or blue blazer) and are forever a member of the Philadelphia Boys Choir & Chorale. By serving as Director of Engagement & Alumni Relations I am the conduit for communication between you and the choir. Alumni not only represent our past, they are an important part of our present and the foundation for our future.

Take time to reach out to me (jhoudeshel@phillyboyschoir.org) and let me know your ideas of how we can best keep the bond of PBCC strong and vital. I look forward to meeting you at the upcoming events scheduled to celebrate our 50th Anniversary and beyond. Don't be a stranger – come out and reconnect with friends, feel that joy again, and SING!

Judy Houdeshel

50th Anniversary Concert & Celebration ... Come sing with us!

The 50th Anniversary Concert represents so much to so many and we want YOU to be a part of it! The concert will take place on Sunday, June 24th at 2pm in the awe-inspiring Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center and will include performances of music composed and arranged specifically for the Choir over the past 50 years. We're sure this performance will bring back memories of your time in the choir!

ger hit those high notes – a special alumni part has been composed by Jeff just for this special occasion. We know you will want to be a part of this once-in-a-lifetime experience of lifting our voices together in song. Click on ALUMNI from the Choir's website (phillyboyschoir.org) to get information about how to purchase tickets for the concert and to RSVP. Then, upon arriving at the Kimmel, make sure you stop by our Alumni Check-in table so we can greet you with a warm welcome and a gift bag (just make sure you RSVP so we know you are coming).

song in your heart. The day won't be complete without you so make your plans today to join us for this wonderful occasion.



A highlight of this special performance will be the singing of "Shenandoah" by the alumni, choir, chorale, and cadets – the Choir's past, present, and future all represented on stage together. How glorious that will sound! And don't worry if you can no lon-

After the concert, continue the fun with a stop at our (relatively) new choir home at 1336 Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia to celebrate with friends old and new at our 50th Birthday Bash & Reunion. We will have the rehearsal hall set up with memorabilia including memories of 50 years of performances and tours. It will be a day that will leave you with a smile on your face and a



Verizon Hall 2017

Coming full circle ... with Justin Hopkins

This past December, the Choir was part of something really special. For the past 9 years, the Choir has performed with Philly Pops in their annual Christmas Spectacular, but this year was different. This year, the Choir got to perform with Choir alum and bass extraordinaire, Justin Hopkins, featured soloist for this Pops series of holiday concerts.

Justin joined PBCC as an advanced cadet in 1992 and then sang Soprano 1 from '93 to '95 and alto 2 from '95 to '97. He remembers being devastated when his voice changed as he knew it meant that he had to graduate. At that time, a boy graduating moving directly into the Men's Chorale was rare. So at age 13, he was relieved, excited, and a bit nervous when Dr. Hamilton tested him and said, "You're a bass 2. Welcome to the Men's Chorale." He sang with the Chorale from 1997-2002. One of Justin's fondest memories as a boy in choir was performing a concert for students in Soweto, South Africa. "They were the most enthusiastic and appreciative audience that I experienced during my time in the choir. Performing for those people in that historic township was an experience I'll never forget."

We recently spoke with Justin during his busy professional schedule which currently has him performing in Albuquerque, NM, and asked him how being in PBCC has affected his professional singing career. He shared, "The choir gave me practically every fundamental skill I need as a professional singer. As an advanced cadet, I learned how to read music. I developed good music study and memorization habits. I learned what it is to tour and how to interact with people all

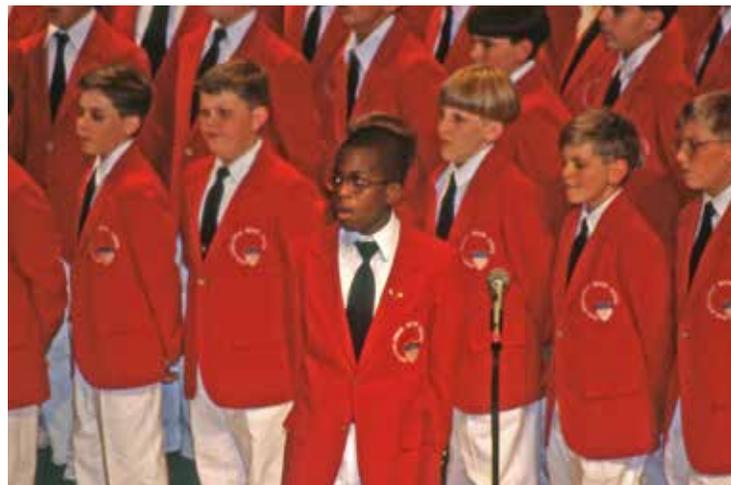


Photo by Jamie Kassa, Bacharach Photography

over the world. I learned how to perform in front of an audience."

This past December, it all came full circle for Justin. "Singing with the choir for A Philly POPS Christmas was a surreal experience for me. Hearing the sound of the boys from the stage; turning around and seeing them in their blazers; it really hit home that I have been fortunate enough to live out a dream that was planted in me like a seed when I was in their place. I sang better because I was singing with them." For those of us lucky enough to be in attendance, it was truly magical and the bond between Justin and the boys was very evident.

Justin hopes to be able to make it back into town for the 50th Anniversary Concert and see the many friends he hasn't seen in years. We're sure it's mutual, Justin.



Australia 1997

Then and Now ...



1978 - Bonn, Germany



1988 - Mississippi River

2008 - Mecklenburg, Germany

2018... Singapore and Vietnam!

Cabaret ... we alumni still got it!

As part of the 50th Anniversary Celebration come join us at a Cabaret to be held at the Choir Building (1336 Spring Garden St., Philadelphia) on Saturday, April 21st at 7:00 pm. In addition to a wonderful time of great entertainment provided by PBCC alumni there will be a "South of the Border" buffet for you to enjoy with family and friends.

This event gives us a unique opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of alumni who are professional musicians, encourage musical careers in the future for our current boys, and strengthen the continuity of past and present choir members and families over the span of 50 years.

Alumni musicians performing include:

Stuart Ambrose (musical theatre)
Daveed Buzaglo (classical voice)
Nathan Butler (pop singer)
Paul Eaton (pop singer)
Matthew Edwards (singer/songwriter)
Alfred Goodrich (singer/cellist)
Joe Haughton (singer)
Ryan Kiernan (musical theatre)
Colin McAdoo (musical theatre)
Joseph Thomas (dance/movement)
Jonathan Hulting-Cohen (saxophonist)
James Pierce (musical theatre)

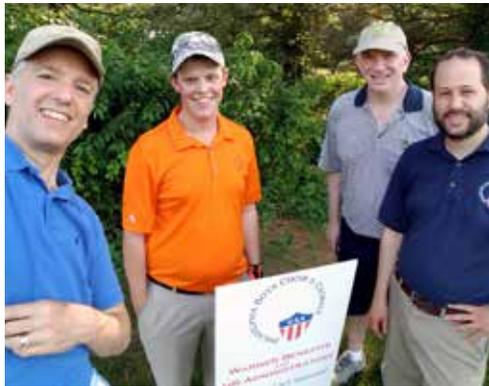
Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$10 for young adults (16 – 20 years old), and free for children 15 and younger.

Babysitting will be provided downstairs for those too young to enjoy the show.

For more information and tickets visit Phillyboyschoir.org/alumni

Golf Outing ... Do, re, mi, fore!

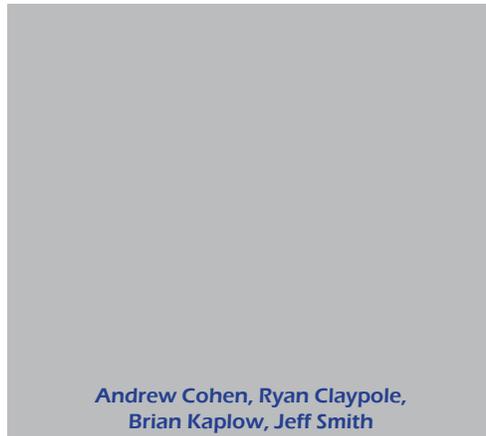
Named after our very own alum, Ukee Washington, the PBCC 24th Annual Ukee



Andrew Cohen, Ryan Claypole,
Brian Kaplow, Jeff Smith

Washington Golf Outing is yet another place for alumni to reunite and have a lively day of golfing together and support the choir at the same time. Gather some friends, alumni or not, and join us on Tuesday, May 21st, on the links at the Penn Oaks Golf Club (150 Penn

Oaks Drive, West Chester, PA). Registration and lunch begins at 12:30 pm followed by a shotgun start at 1:30. After a round of golf, enjoy an open-bar cocktail hour with hors d'oeuvres followed by awards and dinner. Golf packages start at \$225 (\$200 for alumni). Sign up today at www.phillyboyschoir.org/alumni.



Andrew Cohen, Ryan Claypole,
Brian Kaplow, Jeff Smith

Contact us ... We'd love to hear from you!

Judy Houdeshel, Director of Engagement & Alumni Relations
jhoudeshel@phillyboyschoir.org

Twitter – @PHLBoysChoir
LinkedIn – Philadelphia Boys Choir Alumni Group

Choir website – www.phillyboyschoir.org/alumni

Did you know that there is a Philadelphia Boys Choir Alumni page on Facebook?
Over 300 alumni are members. Join in on the conversation today!

Calendar of Events ... Mark your calendars!

April 21

Alumni Cabaret

May 9

Voices of Children
(Annual Corporate Dinner)

May 21

Ukee Washington
Golf Outing

June 23

Black Tie Gala
at The Bellevue

June 24

50th Anniversary Concert
& Birthday Bash/Reunion

Details for all
of these events are
on the alumni page:
[www.phillyboyschoir.org/
alumni](http://www.phillyboyschoir.org/alumni)