



## Holidays and Harmonies

Elaine Martin

After a busy summer of performances, our fall was spent working hard on getting ready for our holiday performances and spring 2023 competition. On December 1st, we raised our voices in joyful song at the annual Frederik Meijer Gardens Christmas Cabaret and fund raiser. We sang a wonderful selection of holiday songs to welcome guests to this classy event; and we did it with some major sparkle and shine! The Java Jive/Fanfare, Joy Ride, West Blend, and Sashay quartets joined us for this performance.



On Dec. 10th, over one hundred family members, friends and supporters were treated to an evening of fun and song at our Christmas Cabaret. The hall at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church was filled with lovely decorations, appetizers and desserts, all prepared by chorus members. The show included holiday numbers, and songs that we performed last December 2021 at the Pearl Harbor 80th Anniversary Commemoration. Several of the guests were donors who helped to send us to Hawaii for this once in a lifetime honor. Everyone seemed to have a great time, especially during the raucous Twelve Days of Christmas sing along!



Several of our members did some holiday caroling at the Marine Corp. and WZZM Channel 13 Tots-for-Tots distributions on Dec. 17th. If the smiles on their faces were any indication, it sure looks like they had a great time!



VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE NEWS, HIGHLIGHTS, & VIDEOS!!

## COACHING ROI

Excerpts from an article by  
Director Denise VanDyken

Coaching is a big investment for the chorus - and for you as a member.

Your dues pay the coaches' fees and expenses, and you spend many hours each year participating. How do you and the chorus get the greatest return on that investment (ROI)?

- Be prepared! Have the notes and words down cold and practice things like tuning, intervals and vowels.
  - Show up! Be fully engaged in listening, learning, and doing what the coaches ask of you.
  - Pay extra attention to your "Ah-ha!" moments and things that feel new or particularly significant to you.
  - Take full responsibility for reviewing, remembering, and rehearsing the important things.
  - Create a personal progress plan and get feedback and support from a buddy, your section leader, or a director to keep you motivated and on track.
  - Maintain healthy routines for your voice, body, mind, and soul.
  - Practice the main points from our November coaching with Steve and Renee.
  - Think about the responsibilities you and your section must embrace (if you don't remember, ask someone).
  - Take deliberate action to be the best singer you can be but avoid striving for perfection. If you're feeling anxious or stressed, find someone to help you work through that, and free yourself up for joyous singing!
  - We're counting on each other to do our part!!
- In Harmony,  
Denise

\* You can find the complete article, including main focus points from the Nov. coaching session, on our website.

## COSTUME CORNER

This amazing costume from our 1987 chorus was designed by our own Gloria Heuschkel. The sparkling butterfly like overlay could be removed and the black dresses used again. Can you find Gloria and Beverly Noirot in this photo?



### Coming Up in 2023

- 1/21 - All day coaching session with Renee and Steve Tramack.
- 1/27-28 - Region 17 Winter Harmony Weekend in Independence, OH.
- 1/28 - GRSA will perform on Sat. evening at Harmony Weekend.
- 2/6 - Guest Night at our Monday rehearsal.
- 2/13 - Zoom coaching session with Renee and Steve.
- 2/25 - Coaching with Nate Ogg
- 3/3 - Region 17 Quartet Workshop with Kim Vaughn, a three time Queen of Harmony.
- 3/11 - All day coaching session with Renee and Steve
- 5/1 - Zoom coaching session with Renee and Steve
- 5/11 - Region 17 Convention and Competition in Cleveland, OH
- Oct. 30th - 75th International Convention in Louisville, KY.

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## Conversation with the Coaches

Written by Elaine Martin

On Dec. 31st, I had the opportunity to have a Zoom conversation with Renee and Steve Tramack from Nashua, NH. The Tramacks have been providing coaching to our chorus for nearly a year now. Here are some highlights from that conversation. Steve and Renee shared some great information about how they became involved in the barbershop world, some of their more memorable experiences, and how they came to be our coaches.

Elaine - "What are your impressions so far?"

Steve - "We feel so incredibly welcomed ... We felt like family after the first time we were there. That's a pretty amazing thing! ... I have rarely encountered a chorus that is so willing to try new things and that works so hard and does so with such a positive attitude. It's clear that the chorus loves each other, Denise, and the leadership team. They seem so very open and willing to accept any constructive feedback and are always striving to improve. It's really wonderful. We feel there's a great deal of trust ... and as a coach, that inspires us to give everything we have. We know that we can take the chorus in a completely different direction (and they are) willing to try things."

Renee - "It's evident the dedication the members have and that everyone in the chorus is making strides to improve. I've noticed ... just an eagerness to receive feedback and validation ... the eagerness to know ... is this right? It's really special to get that kind of feedback, especially as an individual coach. To say 'Yes, that's great!' or 'Let's try something else ... that might fit the way you learn better.' It's just been a lot of fun to hear all the voices and just celebrate the gifts they share."



Steve - "Each time we have identified some key areas to focus on, the chorus has not only met but has exceeded those expectations! The impressive thing is that the areas we talked about didn't backslide (between coaching sessions). In fact, they became strengths! ... The chorus clearly takes to heart the areas we focus on and are building on that. It's not common when working with a group regularly to come back the next time and now whatever you worked on is fixed!! That's a great testament to the dedication of the members and the leadership."

Elaine - "Do you have a favorite take away moment so far?"

Renee - "I always leave going WOW! They worked so hard and they've come so far from the beginning of the day to the end! It is always so thrilling to see that improvement. "

Steve - "I remember the last run of the package (at the Nov. session) and it was after several hours at that point. The snow was falling and piling up behind you ... and with all the distractions and the fatigue of the day and worry about driving home, the chorus still delivered the best performance of the day. That spoke volumes!"

Elaine - "So what's next? Where do we go from here?"

Steve - The chorus "far exceeded our expectations for the ballad on our last day...from both the technical and artistic perspective. We look forward to doing the same with the up-tune... and taking (the ballad) to the next level. I think there's more. I'd like to turn the crank one more time."

Both Steve and Renee stated that their hope is that when we go to our next contest, we will "beat every past version of the GRSA". ... That we "set a new personal best" and that each member can come off the stage feeling like "I gave everything I can give". As Steve said, "It's all about the journey!"

\*Visit our website for the full interview.