
 4880
1.224
93 11.11

A New Direction

After 26 Years, Robert Dale Founder Passes Baton to Thomas

325FF

 BY JOSH MAULIFFE
THE SUNDAY TIMES

When Robert Dale Chorale takes the stage for the start of its 27th season in November, there will be one glaring absence.

Robert Dale. After an extensive search, the renowned local classical music chorus has chosen Dr. Steven Thomas, an assistant professor and director of choral activities at Wilkes University, to take the baton from chorale founder Robert Dale Herrema, the only conductor the group has ever known.

So just how does a man come to leave his baby after 26 years of constant nourishment?

"The kid is 26, got to let him out of the house," Mr. Herrema quipped.

Seems apt that the 63-year-old Clarks Summit resident made those comments from his vacation home in Naples, Fla., considering leisure time, or lack thereof, was among the primary contributing factors to his parting ways with the group.

MORE FREE TIME

Simply put, Mr. Herrema wanted more free time to travel, particularly to the Midwest, where his three children, nine grandchildren and elderly parents all reside. In fact, it was during a trip home from his native Michigan last summer when he turned to his wife and said, "I think I'm going to step down."

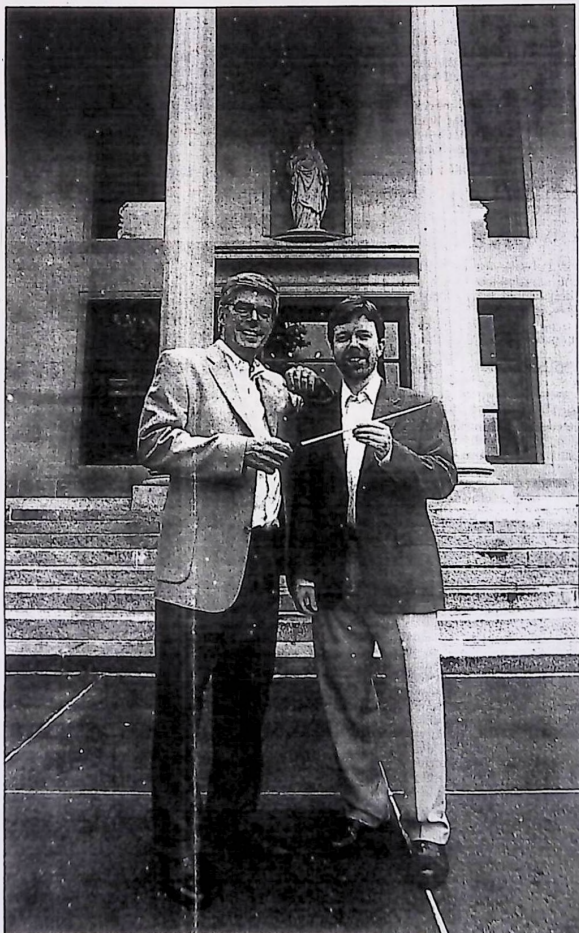
"I don't know how much I'll miss it," said Mr. Herrema, who's going into his final year as an associate music professor at Marywood University. "So far, I'm good with it."

And he's good with the group's choice of successor.

"I think he's an excellent choice," Mr. Herrema said of Dr. Thomas. "I'm very, very pleased with the decision."

IN EDUCATION

At Wilkes since 1999, Dr. Thomas conducts the university's chorus and chamber singers and serves as vocal coach for the school's theatrical productions. In addition, the 33-year-old Forty Fort resident teaches courses in choral music education, con-



LINDA MORGAN / THE SUNDAY TIMES

It's the end of an era, Robert Dale Herrema, founder of the Robert Dale Chorale, left, passes his conductor's baton to the group's new music director, Wilkes University music professor Steven Thomas.

About Steven Thomas

WHO: Steven Thomas, new music director of the Robert Dale Chorale

AGE: 33

RESIDENCE: Forty Fort

EDUCATION: A native of Kansas City, Dr. Thomas earned a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts in choral conducting from Yale University.

AT WORK: Conductor of Wilkes University's chorus and chamber singers and vocal coach for the school's theatrical productions. In addition, he teaches courses in choral music education, conducting and music history, and is the coordinator of the university's New and Unusual Arts series.

He previously worked at the University of Bridgeport, and is the former director of the Harmonia Choral Society in Cheshire, Conn., and the Greater New Haven Community Chorus.

Over the years, he's assembled choruses for a vast array of artists and orchestras, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, Boston Camerata, Hartford Symphony and Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

ducting and music history, and is the coordinator of the university's New and Unusual Arts series.

A native of Kansas City, Dr. Thomas learned to read music roughly around the same time he learned to read. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts in choral conducting from Yale University.

From there, he took a position at the University of Bridgeport, while also assuming directing duties of Harmonia Choral Society in Cheshire, Conn., and Greater New Haven Community Chorus.

On the side, he's assembled choruses for a vast array of artists and orchestras, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, Boston Camerata,

Hartford Symphony and Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

According to chorale member John Weiss, the group got the word out on the vacancy through local colleges and job posting sites like Chorus America. The search committee received applications from as far away as Illinois. That one probably didn't realize it was just a part-time gig, Mr. Weiss said.

Dr. Thomas was encouraged to try out by several acquaintances from the chorale. The possibility of working with a group of singers "very committed to the art of making music" left him "intrigued, excited and interested."

"Certainly, I had heard of

Occasions for 'Celebration'

Here's the Robert Dale Chorale's 2004-05 concert schedule, the theme for which is "Celebrations":

A Celebration of Singing
Nov. 6 — 7:30 p.m., St. Stephen's Church, Wilkes-Barre
Nov. 7 — 3 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church, Scranton
A Northeast Christmas
Dec. 4 — 7:30 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church
Dec. 5 — 3 p.m., St. Nicholas Church, Wilkes-Barre

21st Annual Messiah Sing-Along
Dec. 19 — 3 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church
20th Annual Bach Festival
Organ Recital, April 2 — 5:30 p.m., St. Peter's Cathedral, Scranton
Chamber Music, April 2 — 8:30 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church
Choral Concert, April 3 — 3 p.m., Covenant Presbyterian Church

the group. I knew how good they were," said Dr. Thomas, who also sings with Lyric Consort, an eight-member local a cappella ensemble.

Dr. Thomas submitted his application in January. For the audition process, which Mr. Herrema intentionally stayed out of, each applicant

spent an hour rehearsing with the chorus, then sat down for an interview with the search committee.

Almost immediately, Dr. Thomas felt comfortable with the group, and was particularly taken by how well they got along with one another.

"It's a happy group," he said. "If you like each other, you can make good music together. That shows in the performances."

DOWN TO SEVEN

Eventually, the committee whittled its search down to seven finalists. It was a strong crop to say the least, Mr. Weiss said, but when time came to make a final decision in early May the committee had reached consensus.

"It was all pretty unanimous," Mr. Weiss said. "He's got an excellent background. He did a great job at Wilkes. He built the program up there. We felt we'd be able to work very easily with him."

"He's got the education, the background and the intelligence. And he's very approachable," added chorale member Doris Bigelow-Lees. "It should be a good transition."

Dr. Thomas was signed to a one-year contract, the monetary value of which he declined to reveal. Whatever it is, it's not enough to make a living on. As Mr. Herrema told the Times-Tribune in 2002, he'd make more "at McDonald's."

Then again, it was never about the money for Mr. Herrema. It was about the music.

Over the course of 191 concerts, Mr. Herrema had the opportunity to work with some of the finest classical compositions in Western civilization. This is, after all, the

Please see CHORALE, Page F2

CHORALE: Singing Group Gets New Leader

FROM PAGE F1

same group that each spring puts on a Bach Festival in honor of the composer Mr. Herrema calls the ultimate "musician's musician."

"The quality of the music was outstanding," Mr. Herrema said.

The same could be said of the singers carrying out his commands, the people he rehearsed with week in and week out for nearly three decades who helped the chorale reach "the top of the (local music) pile."

"There's great local talent here, and I was fortunate enough to capture some of that talent," Mr. Herrema said. "They're a very talented musical group. On the other

hand, they became like family."

The feeling is mutual.

"It's bittersweet," said Ms. Bigelow-Lees. "Everyone was very choked up at the last concert."

Within the next couple weeks, Dr. Thomas will begin practicing with the 25-member chorale in preparation for the upcoming season, the theme of which is "Celebrations." He said the group's Nov. 6 and 7 kickoff concerts will be filled with "joyous, happy music about newness" that "shows the group at its best."

"I want to start off with a bang," Dr. Thomas said.

He has no intention of mes-

sing with the chorale's core principles. His primary goal will be continuing to improve upon the foundation set by Mr. Herrema, with hopes of turning the chorale into a "major cultural jewel in the area, on par with the Philharmonic."

"For me, there's no sound like the sound of human voices singing together," he said. "The group is very good, and I get the sense that not enough people are aware of that."

Thus, in hopes of raising the chorale's profile, Dr. Thomas plans to make his presence felt in a big way throughout the community.

"I want this incredibly beautiful experience to be ex-

perienced by as many people as possible," he said. "I think if people actually went and heard it they'd get hooked."

"Everyone who loves the arts should come hear us sing."

Despite the change in regime, Mr. Herrema's legacy will carry on. No plans have been made to rename the group.

"It's taken a long time for people to know the name," Mr. Weiss said. "We should keep it."

"I don't mind the name staying the same," Dr. Thomas said. "Bob built this wonderful organization. I'm looking to reap the fruits of his work."

Contact the writer:
jmcullife@timeshanrock.com

Robert Dale turns his chorale over to Wilkes professor

By Josh Mankoff
Times-News Staff Writer

CU
9-17-04

When Robert Dale Chorale takes the stage for the start of its 27th season in November, there will be one glaring absence.

Robert Dale. After an extensive search, the renowned local classical music chorus has chosen Dr. Steven Thomas, an assistant professor and director of choral activities at Wilkes University, to take the baton from chorale founder Robert Dale Herrema, the only conductor the group has ever known.

So just how does a man come to leave his baby after 26 years of constant nourishment?

"The kid is 26, got to let him out of the house," Herrema quipped.

Seems apt that the 63-year-old Clarks Summit resident made those comments from his vacation home in Naples, Fla., considering leisure time, or lack thereof, was among the primary contributing factors to his parting ways with the group.

Simply put, Herrema wanted more free time to travel, particularly to the Midwest, where his three children, nine grandchildren and elderly parents all reside. In fact, it was during a trip home from his native Michigan last summer when he turned to his wife and said, "I think I'm going to step down."

"I don't know how much I'll miss it," said Herrema, who's going into his final year as an associate music professor at Marywood University. "So far, I'm good with it."

And he's good with the group's choice of successor.

"I think he's an excellent choice," Herrema said of Thomas. "I'm very very pleased with the decision."

At Wilkes since 1999, Thomas conducts the university's chorus and chamber singers and serves as vocal coach for the school's theatrical productions. In addition, the 35-year-old Forty Fort resident teaches courses in choral music education, conducting and music history, and is the coordinator of the university's New and Unusual Arts series.

A native of Kansas City, Thomas learned to read music roughly around the same time he learned to read. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts in choral conducting from Yale University.

From there, he took a position at the University of Bridgeport, where also as-

suming directing duties of Harmonia Choral Society in Cheshire, Conn., and Greater New Haven Community Chorus.

On the side, he's assembled choruses for a vast array of artists and orchestras, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, Boston Camerata, Hartford

Symphony and Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

According to chorale member John Weiss, the group got the word out on the vacancy

through local colleges and job posting sites like Chorus America. The search committee received applications from as far away as Illinois.

That one probably didn't realize it was just a part-time gig, Weiss said.

Thomas was encouraged to try out by several acquaintances from the chorale. The possibility of working with a group of singers

"very committed to the art of making music" left him "intrigued, excited and interested."

"Certainly, I had heard of the group. I knew how good they were," said Thomas, who also sings with Lyric Consort, an eight-member local a cappella ensemble.

Thomas submitted his application in January. For the audition process, which Herrema intentionally stayed out of, each applicant spent an hour rehearsing with the chorus, then sat down for an interview with the search committee.

Almost immediately, Thomas felt comfortable with the group, and was particularly taken by how well they got along with one another.

When the time came to make a final decision in early May the committee had reached consensus.

"It was all pretty unanimous," Weiss said. "He's got an excellent background. He did a great job at Wilkes. He built the program up there. We felt we'd be able to work very easily with him."

"He's got the education, the background and the intelligence. And he's very approachable," added chorale member Daris Hightower-Lewis.

Thomas was signed to a one-year contract, the monetary value of which he declined to reveal. Whatever it is, it's not enough to make a living on. As Herrema told the Scranton Times-Tribune in 2002, he'd make more "at McDonald's."

Within the next couple weeks, Thomas will begin practicing with the 25-member chorale in preparation for the upcoming season, the theme of which is "Celebrations." He said the group's Nov. 6 and 7 kickoff concerts will be filled with "joyous, happy music about new-

ness" that "shows the group at its best."

Thomas has no intention of messing with the chorale's core principles. His primary goal will be continuing to improve upon the foundation set by Herrema, with hopes of turning the chorale into a "major cultural jewel in the area, on par with the Philharmonic."

And, despite the change in regime, Herrema's legacy will carry on. No plans have been made to rename the group.



LINDA MORGAN/TIMES-NEWS

Robert Dale Herrema passes the baton to Dr. Steven Thomas

Robert Dale turns his chorale over to Wilkes professor

By Jack McQuinn
Times-Staff Writer

CV
9-17-04

When Robert Dale Chorale takes the stage for the start of its 27th season in November, there will be one glaring absence.

Robert Dale, After an extensive search, the renowned local classical music chorus has chosen Dr. Steven Thomas, an assistant professor and director of choral activities at Wilkes University, to take the baton from chorale founder Robert Dale Herrema, the only conductor the group has ever known.

So just how does a man come to leave his baby after 26 years of constant nourishment?

"The kid is 26, got to let him out of the house," Herrema quipped.

Seems apt that the 63-year-old Clarks Summit resident made those comments from his vacation home in Naples, Fla., considering leisure time, or lack thereof, was among the primary contributing factors to his parting ways with the group.

Simply put, Herrema wanted more free time to travel, particularly to the Midwest, where his three children, nine grandchildren and elderly parents all reside. In fact, it was during a trip home from his native Michigan last summer when he turned to his wife and said, "I think I'm going to step down."

"I don't know how much I'll miss it," said Herrema, who's going into his final year as an associate music professor at Marywood University. "So far, I'm good with it."

And he's good with the group's choice of successor.

"I think he's an excellent choice," Herrema said of Thomas. "I'm very very pleased with the decision."

At Wilkes since 1999, Thomas conducts the university's chorus and chamber singers and serves as vocal coach for the school's theatrical productions. In addition, the 33-year-old Forty Fort resident teaches courses in choral music education, conducting and music history, and is the coordinator of the university's New and Unusual Arts series.

A native of Kansas City, Thomas learned to read music roughly around the same time he learned to read. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts in choral conducting from Yale University.

From there, he took a position at the University of Bridgeport, while also as-

suming directing duties of Harmonia Choral Society in Cheshire, Conn., and Greater New Haven Community Chorus.

On the side, he's assembled choruses for a vast array of artists and orchestras, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, Boston Camerata, Hartford Symphony and

QUICK INFO

WHO: Steven Thomas, new music director of the Robert Dale Chorale

AGE: 33

RESIDENCE: Forty Fort

EDUCATION: A native of Kansas City, Dr. Thomas earned a bachelor's degree in music from Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts in choral conducting from Yale University.

AT WORK: Conductor of Wilkes University's chorus and chamber singers and vocal coach for the school's theatrical productions.

the art of "making music" left him "intrigued, excited and interested."

"Certainly I had heard of the group. I knew how good they were," said Thomas, who also sings with Lyric Consort, an eight-member local a cappella ensemble.

Thomas submitted his application in January. For the audition process, which Herrema intentionally stayed out of, each applicant spent an hour rehearsing with the chorus, then sat down for an interview with the search committee. Almost immediately Thomas felt comfortable with the group, and was particularly taken by how well they got along with one another.

When the time came to make a final decision in early May the committee had reached consensus.

"It was all pretty unanimous," Weiss said. "He's got an excellent background. He did a great job at Wilkes. He built the program up there. We felt we'd be able to work very easily with him."

"He's got the education, the background and the intelligence. And he's very approachable," added chorale member Doris Hglow-Lee.

Thomas was signed to a one-year con-

tract, the monetary value of which he declined to reveal. Whatever it is, it's not enough to make a living on. As Herrema told the Scranton Times-Tribune in 2003, he'd make more "at McDonald's."

Within the next couple weeks, Thomas will begin practicing with the 25-member chorale in preparation for the upcoming season, the theme of which is "Celebrations." He said the group's Nov. 6 and 7 kickoff concerts will be filled with "joyous, happy music about new-



LINDA MORRIS/TIMES-TRIBUNE

Robert Dale Herrema passes the baton to Dr. Steven Thomas

ness" that "shows the group at its best."

Thomas has no intention of messing with the chorale's core principles. His primary goal will be continuing to improve upon the foundation set by Herrema, with hopes of turning the chorale into a "major cultural jewel in the area, on par with the Philharmonic."

And, despite the change in regime, Herrema's legacy will carry on. No plans have been made to rename the group.

Musical treat not to be missed ⁷⁻³¹⁻⁰⁴

On a recent Saturday I had the distinct pleasure of attending a performance presented by the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary. And I was not alone: St. Stephen's Church was so full of music-lovers it was difficult to find a seat. It is evidently no longer a secret that Nancy Sanderson and PAI are building a phenomenal summer program for high school musicians that draws talented students and gifted teachers from across the coun-

try.

Saturday's performance was remarkable for both the passion and precision that conductors John Vaida and Eckart Preu were able to inspire in their young performers. The PAI Institute Chorus' performance of Haydn's Creation featured soloists Allyss Haecker, Kent Smith, and local tenor Mark Kratz, familiar to NEPA Philharmonic audiences from his performance in last November's Mozart Requiem. The PAI Symphony Orchestra performed Weber's Overture from Der Freischutz and the finale from Saint-Saens' Symphony No. 3. This last work was especially enjoyable as it featured Mark Laubach, organist at St. Stephen's. If you were one of the few who missed the concert, PAI's summer season is only half over — you still have many opportunities to experience the artistry of these young musicians.

Dr. Steven Thomas
Music Director, Robert Dale
Chorale
Director of Choral Activities,
Wilkes University

Group marks 10 years of song

7L 5-16-04

By MARQUES G. HARPER
mharper@leader.net

On first impression, you might think The Lyric Consort, Northeastern Pennsylvania's professional a cappella group, is a decade-old, hoity-toity group of diva vocalists who couldn't distinguish pop star Britney Spears from rapper Missy Elliott.

You might think the group's main body of songs, sacred anthems and secular madrigals from the 16th century, doesn't fit your 21st-century tastes.

But if you close your eyes and take in the unaccompanied sound of voices rising and falling and blending together you might come away singing a different tune, as did a visitor on a recent Saturday morning as the group's members sat rehears-

IF YOU GO

What: The Lyric Consort's 10th Anniversary Concert

When: 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday

Where: First Presbyterian Church, South Franklin Street, Wilkes-Barre (Friday) and St. Luke's Church, Wyoming Avenue, Scranton (Saturday)

Admission: \$10

Information: 287-4964 ext. 5 or lyricconsort.org

ing in a semi-circle in front of the main altar at the First Presbyterian Church in Wilkes-Barre.

"There's nothing more beautiful than the sound of the human voice," says Steven Thomas, director of choral activities at Wilkes University, who joined the ensemble two years ago.

And hearing the Consort in action is like stepping into the soundtrack of a modern-day art film. The haunting and lovely voices of the group's eight members layer to form a lush musical landscape to fill a void left by today's overproduced music and pop darlings.

While the a cappella sounds are refreshing in the age of computer-generated music, there's another surprise when it comes

See SONG, Page 7F

The members of The Lyric Consort are wrapping up the ensemble's 10th-anniversary season with two nights of concerts this week in Wilkes-Barre and Scranton. The a cappella group sings sacred anthems and secular madrigals of the 16th century, folk songs, jazz and contemporary choral music.

Tempo I.

SONG

Continued from Page 1F

to the Consort. Having outlived some singers' entire run, the Consort has stayed true to the original intentions of the group, which formed in 1993, while expanding the repertoire to include jazz, spirituals and the newest of contemporary choral songs.

The group, which has performed in Pennsylvania and New York, is wrapping up its 10th year with two nights of area concerts — one at First Presbyterian Church in Wilkes-Barre on Friday, the other at St. Luke's Church of Scranton on Saturday — called "My Spirit Sang All Day."

During the anniversary season, the ensemble has completed performances and arts-education residencies at Bucknell University and King's College, performed at a regional conference for the Association of

Anglican Musicians and collaborated in performances with the Dartmouth Chamber Singers, Vermont Public Radio, the Four Nations Ensemble and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

On the way to celebrating 10 years, the group, which has recorded three CDs and toured in South Wales and England, has developed a bit of a following as it performs throughout the state and mid-Atlantic region, thanks in part to the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation's support program, Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour.

The group's endeavors also are supported through the Pennsylvania Partners in Arts, a joint effort of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Scranton Area Foundation. The group's members say the financial support has allowed them to travel and offer the music of another time to a variety of audiences.

"They're such a good group," says Matthew Herman, a Lancaster-based composer who is married to Consort member

Jennifer Adam. "It's nice from a composer's point of view because I didn't have to worry about any limitations. I've been one of their biggest fans."

An example of their efforts is the commissioned piece Herman adapted from an e.e. cummings poem. It's called "what if a much of a which of a wind." The piece will premiere during Consort concerts this week.

"The poem was written not so much for the words but for the sound of the words," says Herman, who is grateful that artistic director Alan Baker pointed out cummings' work to him.

Along with the new piece, the group will perform songs from its past decade of concerts and performances including Franz Biehl's "Ave Maria," Danny Knew Ye."

The varied repertoire, however, is a switch from the early years of the group, says Baker, the group's artistic director, who teaches at Bloomsburg University. The Consort mem-

bers once strictly stuck to medieval and renaissance music but eventually had a change of heart once members hit the road for concerts.

"We found that was a little bit highbrow," Baker says.

Vocal acrobatics aside, there have been other changes that only a decade can bring, especially to musicians: A few group members have come and gone off to try new lives. There was a marriage between Baker and one of the sopranos, Susan Kelly. And there has been the widening of waistlines and more gray hair among senior male vocalists, one member says.

Today's Consort roster has been together for two years and is primarily composed of 20- and 30-something music educators. The tight-knit group, which started out as a quartet before expanding, includes sopranos Leslie Mason Moran and Kelly, altos Jodi Rinehimer and Adam, tenors Baker and Thomas, and bass vocalists Christopher Gallo and Francis McMullen.

"It's a great group," Thomas says. "Very high-level singing — something I enjoyed doing very much. We all have voices that work pretty well together."

"No one has entertained pretensions that we quit a day job and do this as a full-time thing," says Baker, who selects the music for the group.

He says the group has improved — something he equates to having worked together for so long.

"There's kind of a linkage there," he says. And those connections have a hand in the music. "Because you spend so much time with them you just know."

An example of the members' dedication and loyalty to the group is apparent when it comes to Adam, who lives in Lancaster County and travels to Northeastern Pennsylvania for weekend rehearsals.

"This type of group is not easy to find," Adam, who started with the group as a college student, says during a quick rehearsal break for coffee and

Krispy Kreme doughnuts. "You just can't form a group like this. The quality is worth the drive."

"It's what keeps me sane," says Kelly, a teacher in Throop. "It's pushing my musician-ship," says another teacher in the group, Jodi Rinehimer. "You do tend to forget that when you get into the classroom."

And for the group's oldest member, Francis McMullen, the 10th-anniversary celebration has been a chance to think about the early days of the group, which he likens to the Manhattan Transfer without the studio effects.

"I find it very rewarding that the group has been able to stay together for so long," says McMullen, a technician at the Kirby Center. "I think it's great that we've been together for 10 years, and I think we have another 10 years of singing together."

With that said, the group members returned to their chairs for another round of singing.

PAI's summer program draws gifted musicians, large crowds

Editor:

CV 7-23-04

This past Saturday I had the distinct pleasure of attending a performance presented by the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary. And I was not alone: St. Stephen's Church was so full of music-lovers, it was difficult to find a seat. It is evidently no longer a secret that Nancy Sanderson and PAI are building a phenomenal summer program for high school musicians that draws talented students and gifted teachers from across the country.

Saturday's performance was remarkable for both the passion and precision that conductors John Vaida and Eckart Preu were able to inspire in their young performers. The PAI Institute Chorus' performance featured soloists Allyss Haecker, Kent Smith, and local tenor Mark Kratz, familiar to NEPA Philharmonic audiences from his performance in last November's Mozart Requiem. The PAI Symphony Orchestra performed Weber's Overture from *Der Freischütz* and the finale from Saint-Saens' Symphony No. 3. This last work was especially enjoyable as it featured Mark Laubach, organist at St. Stephen's and one of the consummate bright lights on the local music scene.

If you were one of the few who missed the concert, PAI's summer season is only half over — you still have many opportunities to experience the artistry of these young musicians.

Dr. Steven Thomas
Director of choral activities
Wilkes University

◆ NAMES & FACES

The Robert Dale Chorale



announces the appointment of **Steven Thomas** as its new music director, starting with the 2004-2005 season.

Thomas

Thomas, who earned a bach-

elor of arts degree in music at Harvard University and a doctor of musical arts degree in choral conducting at Yale University, succeeds Robert Dale Herrema, who is retiring after 26 years as founder and music director of the group that bears his name. Thomas is the director of choral activities at Wilkes University, where he conducts the Wilkes University Chorus and Wilkes University Chamber Singers and serves as vocal coach for the musical theater productions. He also teaches courses in choral music education, conducting and music history and is the coordinator of the university's NUArts: New and Unusual Arts series. Thomas has prepared choruses for performances with a variety of artists and ensembles, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, the Boston Camerata, the Hartford Symphony and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic. He will be conducting auditions in the next month to fill any openings in the core of 24 professional singers. He will also conduct auditions for volunteer singers with the chorale. Contact him at 408-4434 or e-mail him at thomasu@wilkes.edu to arrange for an audition. For information about the chorale, contact Doris Bigelow-Lees at 586-3921 or visit www.robertdalechorale.org.

STANDARD-SPEAKER

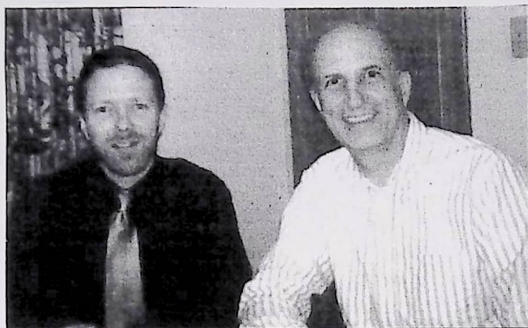
HAZLETON, PA
SUNDAY 21,772
MAY 2 2004



Burrelles
COMMUNICATIONS

104
X.24.

53 EX



Steven Thomas, left, the new music director of the Robert Dale Chorale, poses with John Weiss, a long-time singer and current president of the chorale's board of directors.

Chorale has new director

Steven Thomas, Ph.D., is the new director of the Robert Dale Chorale.

Thomas, the director of choral activities at Wilkes University, succeeds Robert Dale Herrema, who is retiring after 26 years as founder and music director of the group.

Thomas teaches courses in choral music education, conducting, and music history, and coordinates the university's NUArts: New and Unusual Arts series. He also conducts the university chorus and the chamber singers.

A native of Kansas City, Mo., Thomas earned a bachelor's degree from Harvard University and a D.M.A. degree in choral conducting from Yale University. He has prepared choruses for performances with a variety of ensembles, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, the Boston Camerata and the Northeast Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

Before coming to Wilkes, he taught at the University of Bridgeport, directed the Harmonia Choral Society in

Cheshire, Conn., and was music director of the Greater New Haven Community Chorus.

He also sings with Lyric Consort, an eight-member a cappella ensemble based in northeast Pennsylvania.

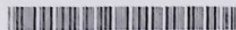
The Robert Dale chorale is the premiere chamber choir in Northeastern Pennsylvania, having appeared on local television, radio and at regional performing arts series events. Singers are auditioned annually to maintain its level of excellence.

The chorale serves the area with public appearances and concerts in nursing homes and at other community functions.

Thomas will be conducting auditions to fill openings in the paid core of 24 singers as well as positions for volunteer singers.

To arrange an audition, contact him at 408-4434 or by e-mail at thomasu@wilkes.edu

For more information about the chorale, call 586-3921.



Burrelles
A COMMERCIAL SERVICES

328
1.3... 53 11...

Chorale Hires New Music Director

The Robert Dale Chorale is pleased to announce the hiring of Dr. Steven Thomas as its new music director starting with the 2004-2005 season. Dr. Thomas succeeds Robert Dale Herrema, who is retiring after 26 years as founder and music director of the group.

Dr. Thomas is the Director of Choral Activities at Wilkes University, where he conducts the Wilkes University Chorus and Wilkes University Chamber Singers and serves as vocal coach for the musical theater productions. He also teaches courses in choral music education, conducting, and music history, and is the coordinator of the university's NUArts: New and Unusual Arts series.

A native of Kansas City, Missouri, he holds a B.A. in music from Harvard University and a DMA degree in choral conducting from Yale University. Dr. Thomas has prepared choruses for performances with a wide variety of artists and ensembles, including Dave Brubeck, Kenny Rogers, the Boston Camerata, the Hartford Symphony, and the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic. Before coming to Wilkes, Dr. Thomas taught at the University of Bridgeport, directed the Harmonia Choral Society in Cheshire, Connecticut, and was music director of the Greater New Haven Community

Chorus. Dr. Thomas has spent five summers teaching 20th century choral music to gifted high school students at the Governor's School of North Carolina, and has guest conducted the choirs at the Performing Arts Institute of Wyoming Seminary in Kingston. He also sings with the Lyric Consort, an eight-member a cappella ensemble based in northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Robert Dale Chorale is the premiere chamber choir in Northeastern Pennsylvania. They have appeared on local television and on many regional Performing Arts Series. Singers are auditioned every year to continue the tradition of excellence to which the Chorale is dedicated. In addition to its annual Concert Series, the Chorale served the area with public appearances and concerts in nursing homes and at other community functions.

The group has received critical acclaim for its performances of works ranging from Renaissance to Contemporary choral music. The Chorale is the host choir for its annual Messiah Sin-Along in December, which has been an area holiday tradition for the past 20 years. In the spring the Chorale presents the only regional Annual Bach Festival, treating local audiences to world-class choral, organ,



From left: Dr. Steven Thomas, new music director and Doris Bigelow-Lees, long-time singer and Chorale board member.

and chamber music performances.

Dr. Thomas will be conducting auditions in the next month to fill any openings in the paid core of 24 singers as well as positions for volunteer singers. Please contact him at (570)

408-4434 or send him an e-mail at thomasu@wilkes.edu to arrange for an audition. For more information about the Chorale, please contact Doris Bigelow-Lees at (570) 586-3921.

'Cynonfardd' Eisteddfod set for April 27

CV 4-18-02

Dr. Herbert J. Plummer, retired professor from King's College, has been named as Adjudicator of Recitations for the 113th "Cynonfardd" Eisteddfod, to be held April 27 at the Dr. Edwards Memorial Congregational Church, Church and Main Streets, Edwardsville. Dr. Plummer is best known locally for his rendition of Ebenezer Scrooge at King's College each Christmastime.

For the past 40 years, he has performed Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" as a one-man show.

While at King's College, Dr. Plummer was professor of Mass Communications. He and his wife, Theresa, raised a family of eight in Wilkes-Barre. They currently reside in Lincoln, Del.

The Adjudicator of Music will be Steven Thomas of Wilkes University. He is director of choral activities, which includes the Wilkes University Chorus

and the Wilkes University Chamber Singers, is musical director for the musical theatre productions, and is chorus master for the Wilkes Opera Workshop productions.



Plummer

The Eisteddfod is a competitive festival of music and recitation and is open to all. The afternoon session begins at 1 p.m.

with competition for children to age 18 in singing, recitations, and piano. A dinner will be available in the Sunday School Room following the afternoon session. At 6:30 p.m., a Gypsymanfa Ganu directed by Wesley Simmers, Wilkes-Barre, will be held followed by the evening competition for adults at 7 p.m.

For info, call Mrs. Sally Morgan DiRico, (570) 868-5928.