



# Share Your Song with Cantores Celestes

Issue 17a - Christmas 2015

CANTORES CELESTES  
CELEBRATES 27 YEARS OF MAKING MUSIC

## From Kelly



Photo by Luigi Nieto Giovanini

*Of course I'll do it!* I told maestro David Fallis. I remember the morning well, Sunday Dec 8, 2013 because it was the day after Cantores Celestes, the women's choir that I direct, sang Vivaldi's 'Gloria' and R. Murray Schafer's 'Snowforms'. Murray was celebrating his 80th year and Cantores Celestes marked its 25th Anniversary. Unbeknownst to me, David came to hear us because he was looking for a women's choir to participate in the Luminato performance of Schafer's 'Apocalypse'. I loved performing Schafer's music and also was taken with his biography and novel, so when David said he thought we'd be a good fit for a work that rivals the forces of a Mahler Symphony, and that I'd have a chance

to join some of the best musicians in the city, I was giddy as a school girl. To me, it was a no brainer if there ever was one.

Then the conductor's score arrived. My first thought was *'This is gorgeous. A work of art, and WOW what an honour to be involved with this epic production.'* But as I looked more closely, my heart raced, my chin dropped to my chest and my second thought was: *'Oh my. I have no idea that these drawings mean. Am I mad?'* Then, after counting over 13 high Bs scooping up past high Cs in a row, I also wondered. *'Can I do it? Can my choir do it?'* Lots of sleepless nights ensued.

David Fallis joined Cantores Celestes in January for a workshop and gave the 'Women of the Apocalypse' the guidance and assurances we needed that we could do it. As the pages of the calendar flipped forward, momentum started to build. As we started memorizing our score and being fitted for costumes, it was becoming increasingly real. Then when we all joined forces at the end of May to begin our joint rehearsals in the COC rehearsal space, it finally started to make sense. We learned how to walk on stage, how to act, and to be still. (Not an easy or natural state of being for women who like to share and laugh!)

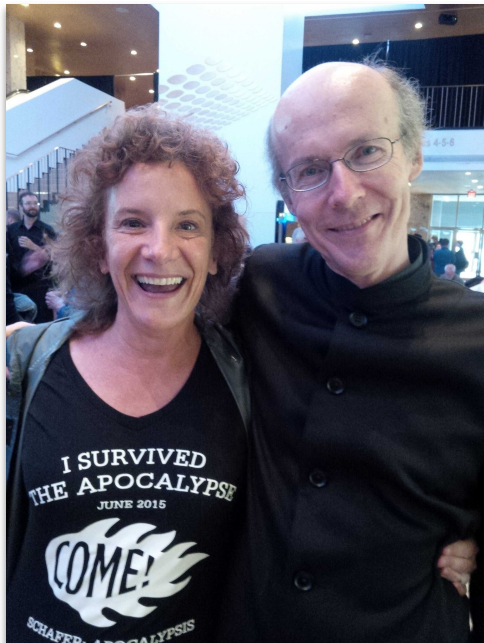
Deep down, I hoped that this would be a chance to fulfill a childhood dream of being on a world stage conducting in my finery and sparkles, looking quaffed and every bit as glamorous as a conductor should be. The reality much more humbling - but still makes me laugh. In keeping with Lemi's direction and vision, our outfits were black pants and jackets that were good-will specials. No make-up was to be worn, and hair was to be pulled back in a bun. This was a big problem, because my naturally curly hair refused to be tamed into submission. One day my hair was cut and gelled but before I could make it home Orphan Annie reappeared. In the end, it was a fist full of bobby-pins that finally did the trick.

When I think about my Luminato experience, I feel honoured and privileged to have had an opportunity to work with such a great Luminato team that included Caroline Hollway, Naomi Campbell, and of course the upbeat and unfatigable Artistic Director Jorn Weisbrodt, and visionary, Director Lemi Ponifasio. The friendships forged with working with all of the singers who were so giving of their time and the kindness and camaraderie of my fellow conductors of the first half - Stephanie Martin, Christine Duncan, Zimfira Poloz, Anita McAlister, Dallas Bergen, Richard Foty, Ryan Scott and Anastasia Tchernikova - will also stay with me for years to come.

Finally, I cannot say enough wonderful things about Maestro David Fallis. I do not think there is anyone who could have been so focused, kind, smart and calm as the end of the World was drawing near. Thank you David, Murray and Luminato for the gift you have given me and Cantores Celestes.

Kelly Galbraith  
Director of Cantores Celestes Women`s Choir  
[www.cantorescelestes.com](http://www.cantorescelestes.com)

(pic of David and I looking happy and tired at the end of the final performance with my hair falling out of line; pic of some Cantores Celestes members and Murray).



*Seven Joys of Christmas: Carols  
Ancient and Modern  
Saturday, December 5th at 7:30pm*



Poster by Shauna Rae

Cantores Celestes has its own page on Facebook! Come check us out!

<http://www.facebook.com/CantoresCelestes>

Check us out on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/>

# About the Concert

## CANTORES CELESTES WOMEN'S CHOIR CELEBRATES THE SEVEN JOYS OF CHRISTMAS

TORONTO, ON For its December concert, Cantores Celestes Women's Choir will explore Christmas music from the twelfth century until today based on ancient texts. *Seven Joys Of Christmas: Carols Ancient and Modern* will be performed on Saturday, December 5, 2015 at 7:30 p.m. at Runnymede United Church in Toronto. Under the direction of Kelly Galbraith, the 50-voice women's choir will sing medieval music and selections from John Rutter's *Dancing Day* and Benjamin Britten's *The Ceremony of Carols*.

"This Christmas concert promises lots of variety and lots of fun," says Kelly Galbraith, who founded Cantores Celestes in 1989. "The rep ranges from meditative, to fun and cheeky to sparkly and glorious. The Britten was the first Christmas piece I conducted for women's voices while a student at Mt. Allison in New Brunswick, so it is quite special to me."

Other program highlights include Lana Walter's *Gaudete! Gaudete!*, Norman Henricks' *O Come Emmanuel* composed for Cantores Celestes, *Christmas Angel* by Corlynn Hanney featuring soloist Jennifer Harewood-Kokoue and Christmas spirituals by Gwyn Arch.

Musicians joining the choir in this celebration are multi-instrumentalists Ben Grossman and the Pope Joans, Jacqueline Goring on harp and accompanist Ellen Meyer, one of Ontario's most in-demand collaborative pianists. A \$1,000 donation will be made to the Outreach Program at Emmanuel Howard Park Church.

"There is something in this program for all tastes," says Galbraith. "The choir loves to sing seasonal music and their joy will be shared with our audience. And with the Pope Joans in the house, there will be many musical surprises."

When: Saturday, December 5, 2015, 7:30 pm

Where: Runnymede United Church

432 Runnymede Road, Toronto

Admission: \$25.00. **No reserved seating.**

## About Kelly

I recently read an article outlining six qualities of a good choir director and they must have been describing Kelly! She has all six and I would add one more. 1) Enthusiasm for music and choral singing which is infectious and inspirational - I don't know anyone who is more enthusiastic and passionate about choral music. 2) Fun is required and it is too bad that the audience can't see some of her antics as she tries to get an emotion or feeling through to the choir. 3) Decisiveness is important and with Cantores Celestes there is only one captain of the ship and it is Kelly! 4) Clarity is extremely important so that the choristers know exactly what is expected of them in each piece. 5) Musicality is necessary, Anyone can learn to play an instrument or sing but without the real knowledge of how the music and harmony work together the results will be flat and uninteresting. 6) Some choirs would test the patience of saints and occasionally, even Cantores Celestes must test Kelly's patience to the limit but she is unfailingly diplomatic and kind, making each choir member feel special. I would personally add that there is a certain level of political savvy as she has to delicately deal with personal requests and well meant suggestions. I have sung under a number of choir directors and none of them had all of these qualities. I know that I can speak for the other members of Cantores Celestes when I say that we have the best choir director EVER! Catherine Roe