



Nanaimo Sings Notes – June 2020

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Our sponsor:



While I was out walking the other day, I came across a group of people making music – in person! They were smiling from ear to ear, singing with gusto, playing ukuleles for accompaniment... and they were following all the safety rules:

- No more than 6 people in their cluster (there were four);
- Safely distanced (they each had 6 ft of distance around them: front, back and sides);
- The venue was large enough to distance and well ventilated (they were in the band stand at Maffeo Sutton Park);

As I watched, I was reminded of Kathleen Allen’s interview on The Current (CBC) a few weeks ago. Kathleen is a Canadian composer/musician. She said that COVID will not stop choral musicians because they are innovative and creative. Canadians have a fundamental need to sing. They will proceed with caution (follow public health advice) but they WILL find ways to sing.

This newsletter is about just that: understanding public health guidelines and finding ways to stay connected to singing and to each other. Looking forward to the day our choral community can sing together again – Linda Dier, Chair of Nanaimo Sings!

COVID 19 Update for choirs

On behalf of Nanaimo Sings! Linda Dier wrote to both Adrian Dix, Minister of Health and Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. Here are excerpts from the response received along with useful sources of accurate and timely information:

You have requested clarification on social distancing recommendations for singers. It is important to understand that there is an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission at gatherings of any size. As a result, by order of the public health officer, events where there are gatherings of larger than 50 people are prohibited and remain prohibited even now that some restrictions have been eased. Groups larger than 50 give the virus an opportunity to re-emerge and no matter how far apart you are, large

gatherings are prohibited. This is not an order of convenience, but a requirement to protect everyone in our province.

Phase three (June – September, if transmission rate remains low or in decline). Under enhanced protocols, a number of things will re-open; however, group size guidelines are not changed from phase two: small gatherings of up to 6 people, gatherings larger than 50 prohibited.

Phase four is conditional on at least one of a).wide-spread vaccination; b).community immunity; and/or c). broad successful treatment.

An article was just published in the Georgia Strait where Dr. Bonnie Henry announced that the BC Centre for Disease Control is preparing a report on musical groups, choirs and bands and will provide guidelines/advice about music events in the near future. You can find the article here: <https://www.straight.com/covid-19-pandemic/june-16-coronavirus-update-bc-dr-bonnie-henry-fast-food-outbreak-risk-spread-from-singing-choirs>

www.gov.bc.ca/covid19 for more information on all aspects of the BC restart plan
<https://covid19.thrive.health> for critical alerts, a self-assessment tool and resources from public health
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data> for up-to-date BC data on COVID- 19

1.888.268.4319 Dedicated phone service available to provide non-health-related information. 7:30 am – 8pm seven days a week

Quotes of note

I love to hear a choir. I love the humanity, to see the faces of real people devoting themselves to a piece of music. I like the teamwork. It makes me feel optimistic about the human race when I see them cooperating like that. - Paul McCartney

May our singing be music for others and may it keep others aloft...May we stand together always and may our voice be strong. – Eric Whitacre from Virtual Choir 6 song Sing Gently

What's new with Nanaimo Sings choirs?

Gabriola Island Singers

We are watching the information about choir resumption. Our members are all missing singing terribly and missing the socialization and fun of our practice nights.

To get a chance to see Gail again and lighten the COVID worry, 7 of the 13 Summer Singers group did a Flash Mob in Gail's back garden. We sang 2 songs that we had prepared for our Spring Concert, but of course, never got to sing. One song is a new Gail Lund original, "We Love to Sing"(very appropriate lyrics). Here is a picture of the group, in COVID attire, singing to her on her deck.

Our best to all the Nanaimo Sings community. We are all hoping to sing with you soon.

-Joan Cellik



Island Consort Chamber Choir

We are keeping connected via email and occasional Zoom meetings. By email we have had the sharing of limericks (all original), a variety of links to websites (humorous and heartwarming), and I have undertaken to send out, periodically, musical selections that I choose to characterize each of the choir members (for Lionel Tanod who is African, two movements from African Sanctus). By Zoom we have had a pub night social and two quiz nights, probably to continue monthly). We agree that there will be no resumption of choral activities until there is a treatment or vaccine to ease the pandemic.

-Bruce Farquharson

Malaspina Choir

We have just had a board meeting and a meeting with Fiona, our new Artistic Director, to discuss possibilities of rehearsals and a concert near to the holiday season. We are very early in the planning and discussion stages and are making several budget proposals so that we know better our financial situation as well. Our choir members last sang together in March and everyone is feeling very sad that we have not been able to have our 50th anniversary concert celebration and gala YET. Also just about the time that rehearsals were cancelled due to the pandemic we hired our new Artistic Director, Fiona Blackburn. All of us are very anxious to start reaping the benefit of her experience and knowledge with our singing and repertoire.

– Mari Lyn Kelly

Nanaimo Youth Choir

We are pretty small and likely positioned to get smaller although I'd like to have that statement disproven. I have been trying to keep the choristers engaged for the last few weeks to finish off our regular season. I have been doing that through sending notes and sending sound clips online of some of the repertoire we had on the go when all the singing was shut down in terms of singing live, together. I have sent out ongoing theory that they could do and some new things to sing with my recorded parts and accompaniments, and a few coaching comments. I have also sent some warm ups that they like so that they have some accompaniments, since they will be singing them alone. We will finish the season with a Zoom wind-up, still in the planning stages. – Marian Smith



Sinclair Singers

So far, the Sinclair Singers have met on Zoom a couple of times to chat and connect with each other. We are committed to finding ways to keep our beloved choral community alive during this challenging time. As their director, I felt inspired to start sending them a song each week from our own concert recordings. We're proud of many years of wonderful recorded performances and I've had fun reminiscing and choosing selections to share with them from our 14 year history. Several of our choir members have expressed how much they love receiving these gems in their inbox every week. We also have a private Facebook group just for our singers so we can keep each other posted on what we're up to, as well as share interesting and fun info.

– Sharon Sinclair



Tidesmen and Rising Tide

We are the registered Nanaimo chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. Inside our chapter we have men and women members within two active choruses: Tidesmen – a male chorus of 40 and Rising Tide – a chorus of men & women of almost 20 members. In addition, we have 7-8 quartets attached to the chapter.

NEWS – Tidesmen continue to meet weekly via ZOOM for educational and social purposes. As well, a number of quartets meet to rehearse in person with social distancing in place. A few quartets are carefully planning and delivering short outdoor charity programs at senior residences.

PLANNED SHOWS – We regretfully canceled our June 14 Annual Show at The Port Theatre. We are still contemplating two Christmas shows in December if health regulations ease sufficiently. – Mike Patterson

Updates from our Choir Associations

From Nanaimo Sings!

- Nanaimo Sings! 2021 Festival has been cancelled for 2021; to be renamed Festival 2022.
- Nanaimo Sings! Planning Committee is meeting regularly to plan, review available information and to keep member choirs informed;
- Zoom meetings for NS member Choir Directors are planned to discuss what choirs are doing and what support is needed moving forward.

From BC Choral Federation (BCCF)

- An article entitled “Choral Federation Rising to Challenges of COVID-19” was published of the Vancouver Sun at this link: http://epaper.vancouversun.com/@Tom_Whalley/csb_qPpDcGOfayKT3wZTPaWkMNMAT0f6WQpSlrM4KirvqTzVuHsMGksES3kN0J1_PlvG
- BCCF held a virtual Town Hall on June 2nd entitled ‘We’ll Sing Again Don’t Know Where, Don’t Know When’ - exploring the loss and grief we are all experiencing right now. The full You Tube video is available at this link: <http://www.bcchoralfed.com/> Linda Dier attended and has provided a summary available at this [link](#).
- BCCF held a virtual Town Hall meeting on June 18th entitled “Same Storm, Different Boats” - choirs navigating business and finance. Further information provided in our next newsletter. The full You Tube video is available at this link: <http://www.bcchoralfed.com/>.

From Choral Canada – Canada Choral

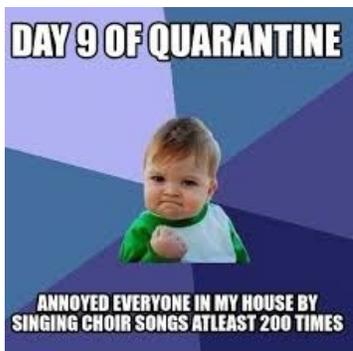
- A Choral Canada National Webinar on COVID-19 and Choral Music in Canada was held on May 20th. A recording of this session is available at: <https://www.choralcanada.org/covid-19-resources.html>

From our directors...resources for home practice

From Lindsay Suddaby - If you have been a long time without singing, or have been sick (or have found yourself TALKING INADVERTENTLY LOUDLY on too many Zoom meetings), straw exercises are a wonderful way to help your voice recover and regain flexibility! You'll need a narrow straw like a cocktail stirring straw or one from a juicebox. A pen cap with a hole will do in a pinch. Here is a link to a video demonstration: <https://youtu.be/0xYDvwvmBIM>

1. Stand in your regular singing posture, and breathe low as you normally would for singing.
2. Make sure your lips are sealed around the straw. While doing the exercises, make sure air isn't coming out of your nose or the corners of your mouth.
3. With the straw in your mouth, do a very slow pitch glide from the bottom of your range to the top and down again, and repeat for 1 or 2 minutes.
4. Do smaller, quicker pitch glides up and down, gradually raising the "peak" pitch - kind of like revving an engine gradually higher - then slide back down.
5. Sing a simple song through the straw.

This back pressure of air on your vocal folds will give them a chance to stretch and "unpress" from strain or inflammation. Happy singing!



From Bruce Farquharson: Laurier Fagnan who directed a Nanaimo Sings! has a DVD on Bel Canto technique for choir members that was recently posted by Choral Canada at this link: <https://www.choralcanada.org/transform-your-choirs-sound.html>

From Patricia Plumley: I plan to offer a series of free 45 minute Zoom sessions over the summer called "Let's Keep Singing!" for those in Nanaimo Sings choirs, who wish to keep the vocal thread going this summer and enjoy the time to work on their voice individually! It will also be a fun way to become acquainted with Zoom and its possibilities. The series will run from June 30 to August 22 (with the exception of July 11 and August 3). Singers will have the option to drop in Mondays at 7pm, Tuesdays at 10am or Saturdays at 10am any time as they wish! We will touch on the following each session:

- Warm-up (bubbler required! 😊)
- Onset/Offset (cork very handy...🎵wine is up to you!)
- Agility (cork useful again)
- Vowel practice
- Voiced and Unvoiced Consonants
- Sight-Singing practice
- Email Trish: plumleymusic@shaw.ca directly to drop-in any time! Links will be sent out five minutes before each session

Links to virtual choir songs and performances

Gail Lund, Director of the Gabriola Island Singers has graciously shared a song she just wrote about the choir shut-down entitled "What Will We Do?" A PDF of the music is available at this [link](#) and a link to a recording by Cathy Tanner, one of her choir members is at this [link](#).

Some Nanaimo Sings choir members have sung in the Messiah at Home Self Isolation choir (3,000 members world-wide), link: <https://www.theseisolationchoir.com/>

Keep Calm and Watch Chor Leoni -- New Livestream Show: Chor Leoni Inside on Facebook and YouTube Wednesdays at 7 pm PDT <https://chorleoni.org/chorleoniinside/>

The Stay at Home Choir featuring the King's Singers sing "And So It Goes" by Billy Joel <https://youtu.be/HINNVwddDJU>

Voces8 sing-along song "Si le le" by Bobby McFerrin: <https://youtu.be/M9xDt4oduYE>

Pentatonix sings "Imagine" by John Lennon: <https://youtu.be/NLiWfUDJ95I>