

**Siskiyou Singers Board Retreat Minutes**  
**November 21, 2020 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom conference**

**Board Members Present:** Mary V.W., Katharine, Laura, Mary B., Michael, Cynthia, Mark, Scott, Rich, Loretta

Meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM.

**October minutes were approved** via motion

**Written Reports**

**Artistic Director – Mark**

I am excited to announce the theme for the spring term. The past four years have given me a greater appreciation of our democracy. I also think that I am not alone in that and that a celebration of our country would be welcome for our audience. We need something to bring us together. The theme for the concert will be:

**Song of Democracy**

The title comes from the classic 13-minute work we will perform by Howard Hanson. I will select a few other pieces to round out the concert. I am going on the assumption that we will still be working virtually, but that we will have a better handle on how it all works. If things change, we will adjust.

Song of Democracy is set to Walt Whitman's poetry. It is important that everyone know that the "patriotism" of this program derives from his concept of "democracy." His radical democracy included all living beings, including animals and grass. :) The programming, which starts with this piece, is based on this concept. No, we will not be performing "God Bless America."

**President – Mary**

We started out this term as a small group and then, when some of our members had to drop, we got even smaller. I don't know all the reasons why our fellow choristers decided against participating in the virtual choir but I think it is worth the ask. It would serve us well to know why people did not want to participate. Those who remained have been steadfast and have, no doubt, learned a lot about virtual singing. It has certainly been a big learning curve for me.

In the week to come I will send out an email to current members and past members. In the email I will share details about our upcoming concert and encourage those who have not yet given virtual choir a try to do so while also encouraging those who did try, to try it again. In addition, I will mention our fund-raiser scheduled for the new year. I will let people know that if they want, they can donate now.

**Membership – Rich – *report submitted orally***

Rich said thanks to member-contactors for pitching in & reaching out to inactive members. There were 39 on the list. They were able to contact 20. 17 said they will hopefully be back in person, not via technology. Several tried to participate via technology and were discouraged but will try again in the spring as we have worked out many of the bugs.

Laura loved talking to the ones on her list. The people were pleased and grateful to be contacted.

There were two threads: I can't do it/ I may rejoin the choir, but not via technology. Mary VW will be sending out an email addressing the technology challenges and impressing the fact that many of them have been overcome. Many people also do not like to hear their solo voice (almost everyone, it seems!).

## Publicity/Programs/Public Relations – Michael

### Concert Publicity:

Media release sent to local broadcast and print outlets on 11/18. Mail Tribune contacted me for additional details, which gives me hope we'll get something more than just a calendar listing.

Concert is now listed on Chorus America website. Info also submitted to Berkshire Choral International, which is going to highlight a holiday video each day during December on its Facebook page, so fingers crossed. I'll also submit to a half dozen local online calendars. (Some of these previously wouldn't accept items for online events, although I'm hoping that has changed.)

On Friday, Dec. 4, I'll call in to Jefferson Public Radio's First Friday Art Watch to talk about the concert going live the following Friday.

Concert info will be posted to about 50 local Facebook groups and six national choral music groups the weekend of Dec. 11. Email announcement will go to our mailing list. The week after our concert goes live, we'll have underwriting spots on both the Classics & News and Rhythm & News services of JPR. This is the only publicity we are actually paying for (\$330 for 20 spots total, although we usually get more than that.)

Website: I implemented a redesign on 11/19, mainly to accommodate sponsor logos on the homepage, which our previous template would not allow. Immediately ran into a couple of issues involving images not appearing and our PayPal donation link being broken but was able to resolve them quickly. Note that this is an interim redesign, although the new template is very flexible, is actually designed for musicians, and has a more contemporary look than our previous site design.

I also created a non-public page on the website with an assortment of sample sponsor logos and links. Keith and his team will be using this to help sell sponsorships.

## Webpage Sponsorships – Keith Baldwin

As you know, our Winter concert will be virtual and will be released on Friday December 11th. The concert program will not be on paper this time, of course, but our supporters will have an even better way to be recognized than having an ad in our paper programs: advertise on the Siskiyou Singers home page!

The ads will be in the form of logos/artwork and a URL provided by the advertiser and will run for one calendar year from the time they contract with us. The prices are \$400 for a larger ad that would be placed higher on our home page, and \$220 for a smaller ad placed further down on our home page. Here's the link to a sample home page that shows how the ads from some past supporters would appear, including live links to their home pages: <https://siskiyouingers.org/sample-home-page-w-sponsor-links/>. You can send this link to an advertising prospect so they can see what they'd be buying.

Here are some talking points about the advantages of advertising on our web page:

- Michael Zuzel, our publicity manager, is actively driving viewers to the Siskiyou Singers web page, specifically:
  - The concert is already listed in the Calendar of Events of the Chorus America website. Michael also submitted an item to the website's Member News section.
  - This week, Michael will be sending a media release to local print and broadcast media. At the very least, he hopes to land in their calendars of events; feature stories are often hoped for and seldom realized.
  - On Friday, Dec. 4, Michael will be interviewed by Geoffrey Riley by phone on Jefferson Public Radio's First Friday Art Watch to talk about the concert going live the following Friday.
  - The weekend that our concert goes live, Michael will post a link and concert description to approximately 50 (!) local Facebook groups, as well as a dozen national groups devoted to choral music.
  - He'll also post info, where appropriate, to a half dozen online calendars. (Some of these previously wouldn't accept items for online events, although he's hoping that has changed.)
  - The week after our concert goes live, we'll have underwriting spots on both the Classics & News and Rhythm & News services of JPR.

- We're sending an email to the entire Siskiyou Singers mailing list
- Having their logo on our home page is likely to lead to many more people seeing their ad/logo than would see it in our printed concert programs
- Their ad/logo will be viewable for an entire year, not just for the 5 performances of our Winter and Spring concerts, and
- Their ad/logo on our home page will have a link that takes an interested viewer immediately to their business home page

Scott Nelson is tweaking the SS print ad contract to make it suitable for online ad contracting. This will be available very soon, so we can complete any ad sale quite promptly. The sooner we can complete a sale, the more the advertiser will benefit from Michael's publicity plan!

**Addition:** Michael/ Keith re: webpage sponsorship- what category (advertising or donation)? Third category? Packages in program in the future: webpage ads + program ads. Development committee will figure this out. This is the new way of doing things, coming out of the COVID era, and many organizations are doing this new version of advertising packaging.

### **Treasurer's report**

Things are looking pretty good compared to last year. There will be two levels of sponsorship, \$400/\$220 on our website. Thanks were given to Michael for coming up with all the advertising for the upcoming online concert.

**P&L:** Net income down \$4,453.21 Deb Sanford , music librarian, covered approximately \$84 for music not returned.

**ACTION:** Mary V. will thank her and tell her it will be converted to a donation.

*To access the full profit and loss (P&L) report, contact treasurer Laura Barlow*

### **Old Business**

#### **Motion for Selling Webpage Sponsorships:**

We will start a sponsorship program for putting donor's logos on our webpage, for a one year sponsorship, of two levels \$220/\$400".

#### **Motion passed**

**Ideas for Spring 2021 Term – how do we get more people involved?:** What will the future of our choir look like, during COVID? SORS has met and sung, masked, in a large room. However, as the restrictions are back on, and we have no way of predicting what even next month looks like, we decided this was unsafe. We need to remain flexible, trust in Dr. Fauci, hope for vaccines to be found safe (and the distribution system working), and if this happens, we will aim for in-person gathering next September.

For summer: we may be able to have a gathering in the park, to sing pieces we already know.

Until there is a vaccine and we all have taken it, we will continue as we are now, as January is fast approaching and it is not looking like it will be safe to meet in person then.

We should consider a technology tutorial for returning singers.

It was suggested that we could all just send a video with sound to Mark, bypassing Soundtrap. We'd sing along to either Mikiko's piano or to the rehearsal recording. Mark would then manipulate each video, to adjust them

to fit into a cohesive piece. Scott is skeptical that the sound would be optimal, and that using Soundtrap results in a better outcome. Using Soundtrap, one can go back in and tweak parts of the recording. We agreed that using Soundtrap is the best tool we have to somewhat replicate choral singing. Mark has looked online and there is not a viable alternative, so we will continue as we have been.

2021: How do get more people involved (besides phone calls). We should start later, schedule a number of small online rehearsals (3-4 people) for returnees, to make them feel comfortable and get them reintegrated. There will be no registration fee, so they can come in, try it out and leave if it doesn't work for them. For those who are missing the group experience, we need to focus on the pleasure that comes from hearing the group pieces, even though there is no physical closeness of singing in a group. Dr. Jim Shames stated recently that this is a unique Thanksgiving, different but not bad. Soon enough we will be back to our normal ways. Our choir experience should be seen this ways well.

### **New Business**

**Fall End of Concert Party** – brainstorming session:

Post-concert party (via Zoom). The entire choir should be involved, with the use of break-out rooms, as a way to connect. They can either be organized (icebreakers) or just for chatting. Each breakout room should have a host, to keep conversation flowing. Also, offer a tutorial ahead of time so people can all be comfortable using Zoom. The current choir participants could have their own party to discuss and celebrate the concert, in December, but the entire group should meet in January.

**Spring 2021 Program:** Mark has become appreciative of our democracy over the past four years, and that it is something to cherish, but in the inclusive way, not the “my country right or wrong” kind of way. “This Land is Your Land” would be an example: the gift that we have here, and what shall we do with it? Spirituals, heartfelt songs that lead to hope. Howard Hanson’s “Song of Democracy” would be included.

Cynthia reminded us that fall of 2022 will be our 40th anniversary .

Mark reminded us we were in the beginning phases of planning another European tour, and that we should not forget about the idea. Next September we can revisit this and start planning for it. Summer of 2023 is the goal.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:05 AM**

**Next meeting January 9, 2021**