

October 8, 2009

Dear Choirmates, classmates, family, and friends:

In my last announcement on December 4th 2008, I lamented that due to waning interest, our choir project appeared to be slowly terminating. Although I am not one to give up easily, I knew that either I would have to become a magician or that it would take a minor miracle to revive this project. As many of you may recall, in order to earn heavenly assistance, I promised in my last announcement to say my prayers every night before bed in hopes that one of those old missing reel-to-reel tapes would somehow materialize. Ok, I must confess that I didn't say my prayers every night, but I must have done something right because my wish has come true! Yes, really it's true! Yeah!

A few weeks ago a package arrived in the mail from Chris Bristah '67. While packing to move to a new house in a new location, she discovered an old reel-to-reel tape in a box. I thought she had sent me a copy of one of the reel-to-reel tapes I already have, but upon closer inspection I realized that the label on the tape read 1967 Christmas Concert, something I had never seen. This music would have been performed during her sister, Cheryl Bristah's senior year (1968). I am stunned; one of my wishes has been granted.

I have now converted the tape to CD format and found that it contains two songs, Gloria by Francis Poulenc and A Boy was Born by Benjamin Britten. The Britten piece came earlier in the concert, probably, as Mr. Sturdevant assures me, as a warm up. The real challenge came later with Poulenc's Gloria. It was composed in six movements for soprano solo accompanied by large orchestra and chorus. The Latin text loosely follows the Roman Catholic Gloria in excelsis Deo, a short hymn of praise to God. In the third through sixth movements, Gail White '68 and Pamela Weinheimer, '68 deliver the sacred text hauntingly and beautifully. Their performances are so haunting and captivating that even mighty Ulysses could not have escaped their call. They are supported by the 1968 choir's captivating and at times seemingly romantic melodic line. Norman Gifford's piano accompaniment substitutes for the orchestral arrangement and his performance is, as usual, brilliant and nonpareil. As you can imagine, Keith Sturdevant is overjoyed by the discovery. He wanted to know where Chris could have gotten the tape. He says that he didn't know it existed. Furthermore, he is thrilled and amazed by the quality of the performance of the 1968 Choir. He says that this is something that the world should know about and he wants all of his former concert choir members to have a copy of this CD. He and I are now discussing this possibility. Wait until you hear this tape; it will make you proud to be a PARKER. In my mind this discovery just adds further evidence that Highland Park High School had one of the best high school choral programs in the United States. Now after you finish reading this letter, I want each and every one of you to go scour every box, closet, and drawer in your house. Somewhere out there must be another reel-to-reel tape or LP of one of our fabulous choirs.

The topic of my second announcement did not take a miracle to accomplish, but I did have to learn a great deal of computer wizardry to pull it off. I am happy to announce that I am in the final stage of completing our choir web site. I have found the whole process daunting, but I have persevered, and if I can find a suitable and affordable web host, we will have a web site. The site contains important announcements and

correspondences, photos of our choirs and of individuals, old programs from our concerts, information about our CBC international debut, as well as music clips from our new 4-CD box set. If you supply me with photos and materials related to your choir experience, I will try to include them. You will be hearing from me again soon with our web address.

Love,

Clifford Larkins, '67 Ph.D.