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lends
professional
touch to
Masterworks
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William Gorton

Director Gorton brings a professional touch to the Masterworks Chorale

By **DEBBIE MURPHY**
H-P Correspondent

Talented, funny, intelligent, compassionate, humble, handsome, passionate, tenor, persistent, dedicated, dynamic, professional, inspirational, singer, composer, director, teacher, administrator - all of these adjectives describe William Gorton, Director of Music at Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church in Ashland, and Artistic Director of the Central Virginia Masterworks Chorale.

Prior to moving to Ashland, Gorton was employed as the choirmaster and accompanist at St. Michael and All Angels Church in Concord, CA Duncan Memorial and Gorton's selection of each other has brought unanticipated musical benefits to Central Virginia.

Gorton grew up in Washington State, but spent many years in California after receiving his Master of Music degree in vocal performance and pedagogy from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J.

Gorton, and his wife Deidra, a tremendously gifted mezzo soprano, met at a singing gig in Los Angeles and as they say, the rest is history. The two feel very much at home here in Ashland; the tempo of life here makes raising a family appealing.

Gorton describes Hanover County as more traditional and community oriented than California. Before coming here he was teaching private music lessons; but Deidra suggested he share his talents in a broader way, so he began looking for new opportunities. While gifted enough to follow a professional path, William's spirituality led him

to a full-time church music directorship. Still, both Gortons do offer private singing lessons.

Realizing that the young lad had musical talent, Gorton's father bought him a piano when he was 7 years old. Gorton began lessons and worked into a deep love of and aptitude for music.

Andie Warfield, Secretary of the CVMC board' and member of the chorale stated, "Ashland is so fortunate to have William. He brings a total package of superior talent and the willingness, dedication and patience to grow local singers into a professionally performing group. He gives of himself continually. The support of Deidra, with her added talent, is an unmatched bonus. This couple brings an unparalleled opportunity to our area on which the Chorale is founded and growing."

William formed the Central Virginia Masterworks Chorale in 2007. The group consists of singers from surrounding counties who love a challenge, and appreciate the opportunity to study under a gifted conductor.

How blessed we are to have an opportunity like this right in our own backyard. For singers who want to immerse themselves in a satisfying artistic experience, the chance is now at their fingertips. Typically, there are two performances each year. Prior to the show, rehearsals take place; for about three months, on Monday evenings for two hours. These are fast-paced, fun, serious, challenging, and over before you know it. Like the old saying goes, time flies when you are having fun.



William Gorton during rehearsal



Members of the Masterworks Chorale

The next performance is **Saturday, April 26 at 8 p.m. at Duncan Memorial UMC**. This concert will feature Franz Schubert's Mass in G, as well as a wide variety of shorter works, including six brief waltzes from *Liebeslieder Walzer* by Johannes Brahms. Anthems include songs of love and nature, appropriate to the spring season. Tickets are \$15 for reserved seating, \$10 for general admission, and \$5 for students. They may be purchased in advance or at the door. To reserve tickets, please call (804) 798-0123. Upcoming events include a gala with silent auction in May, a benefit opera duo concert in September presented by the Gortons, and the CVMC's winter 2008 Holiday Concert Dec. 7, featuring J. S. Bach's Magnificat and other holiday selections.

Please see <http://www.cvmc.org> for additional details.

Gorton would love to see the chorale grow in numbers. Current singers are dedicated and enthusiastic, providing a good core group, but the door is definitely open to more folks who long for satisfying musical opportunities and an artistic challenge. If you are interested in becoming a chorale singer, call Gorton at (804) 212-4945.

Amy Newell of Doswell, the design chair for CVMC, describes her experience with the chorale: "I joined the CVMC because I get to sing beautiful music that speaks to my soul, and the souls of others. I get to sing with an incredibly talented and devoted group of people. I am always learning, from a director whom I hold in very high regard."

Andy Jurasek of Ashland said, "The town of Ashland has not yet fully awakened to the fact that they have a talented group of local singers organized under a very gifted musical director. Attending one of our performances is not only a

wonderful musical experience, but it is also a truly educational experience. Those two characteristics of our work have made me a loyal chorale member and will provide the incentive for increased attendance at our performances in the coming years. The audience reaction to our performances has been tremendous and makes all of the hard work worthwhile."

Renee Hausenflock of Mechanicsville, whose husband Alan also sings with the chorale, shares her perspective: "I have sung in choirs and choruses as long as I can remember and had stopped singing in the choir of the local church to which I belong because of a lack of direction. When I heard about this chorus, I was anxious to see what it was about. I was impressed with William's professionalism and love for the music.

"The group itself is made up of terrific people and I truly enjoy the fellowship. The music William chooses is not easy, but when it comes together after extensive practice, it is truly beautiful and it gives each member a true sense of accomplishment. I enjoy being a member of such a wonderful group of people and being led by a director with as much talent and passion as William."

Glenda Cramer, who lives in New Kent said, "I drive in from New Kent County to participate in CVMC. It is such a joy to sing such good music with good singers under a great director. It is well worth my 40-minute each way trip... Not only does William Gorton direct, he teaches us how to sing better, with frequently changing vocal exercises, so that it is never boring. His expectations are very high, yet we still manage to have fun. The CVMC allows me to do more difficult music than at my home church, but I am also able to offer my improving vocal and music reading skills back to my home church. I consider it an adventure."

About the Central Virginia Masterworks Chorale

The Central Virginia Masterworks Chorale is a 501(c)(3) organization, so contributions are tax deductible.

In addition to compensation for the artistic director, the chorale hires professional accompanists such as members of the Richmond Symphony, soloists, and rehearsal accompanists for performances.

Make your check payable to CVMC, and mail it to P.O. Box 415, Ashland, VA 23005. If you have any questions about supporting the Chorale, call president, Margie Turbyfill, at (804) 368-7276.

The deadline for ads is April 14. Please contact Debbie Murphy at (804) 227-3664 if you are interested in purchasing an ad for the upcoming program.



"Making and experiencing music together is a demonstration of the best of human endeavor."

[William Gorton](#)
[Artistic Director/Conductor](#)