

Mission to Inspire has National Impact

By Laura Knox, Joyful Noise Guest Musician

Joyful Noise members have always loved singing with all their hearts, but now their vivacity for song is spreading throughout the United States! In 2008 the singers adopted a "Mission to Inspire." Their March 2011 performance for the American Choral Directors Association's National Conference in Chicago prompted several conductors in the audience to begin planning choruses for singers with disabilities. Some of these ensembles are already rehearsing and giving concerts. A **ChoralNet online "community"** provides a forum for these new choruses to share ideas and inspire others. ACDA's Eastern Division invited Joyful Noise to form the core of a Festival Choir for singers with disabilities at its 2012 conference.

Northern Illinois choral director Steven Szalaj, who launched **Encore! Joyful Noise** in October 2011, reflected, "I was deeply touched by your session in Chicago, which demonstrated why we love choral music. It is, first and foremost a human art; that is - WE are the music. I'm sure it required quite an effort to make the trip to Chicago. Please know that your presence was worth every bit of energy that it took! Your performance also provided inspiration to begin an ensemble here in Crystal Lake. Folks here need a joyful noise!"



Photo by Marshall Kurtzman

Alice Parker leads ACDA's Festival Choir in Providence

Verallen Kleihenz of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was similarly inspired by Joyful Noise's singing: "At the 2011 National ACDA Conference, the Joyful Noise chorus touched my heart in a way that no other performance during the conference had. I thought back to my own situation and my special needs son, who loves to sing but is not able to participate in a conventional choir. Watching this choir gave me hope for my son and others like him. With the help of two good friends, I started **Expressions of Joy** in June." In its first nine months, this new chorus has already given eight performances.

In April, conductor Don Martin wrote, "More than a year later I am still feeling the sensation of joy, love and gratitude that I received while experiencing the Joyful Noise Chorus at the ACDA convention in Chicago. That day, as I was enjoying my tears, I knew what I had to do: to offer folks here in Decatur [IL] the opportunity to sing together in a chorus. Our team would like to make a trip to NJ to see you and your singers, and gain some insights into how you have made things work."

Joyful Noise members truly love to sing, perform and share from their hearts. Their love of music is reaching across the nation, so that other adults with disabilities will have the chance to sing and share in the joy that comes from being a part of a performing ensemble.

To join Joyful Noise, or for more information, please contact Cathy Sonnenberg: 215-771-1003 or Cathy@JoyfulNoiseChorus.org or visit www.joyfulnoisearchorus.org.

Joyful Noise to "Transform Our World" at Yale Festival

By Marguerite Brooks*

During Joyful Noise's ACDA presentation in Providence, I held the microphone for a singer named Kevin. As Kevin began to sing, my first thought was, "He has an amazing voice!" And then, "Wow! He's really performing!" But what moved me most was that Kevin was singing totally from his heart. His poignant solo lifted everyone in the room to their feet. When Joyful Noise's singers perform at our **Yale International Choral Festival** in June, I expect the international audience to be similarly moved by their singing.

At Yale, Joyful Noise will be performing on the same stage and meeting singers from South Africa and China. In a way, this community of people with different abilities is like a foreign culture to some of us – just as much as a choir from China. This culture is not something we know enough about, and we need to know more about our fellow human beings.

Our festival's focus is **"Choirs Transforming Our World."** Joyful Noise is doing just that. By putting into action the philosophy that music is open to everyone, Joyful Noise is changing lives around the world. In June conductors from four continents will witness what Joyful Noise accomplishes with singers of different abilities and may consider providing access to this kind of experience in their own countries.

Yale is one of the world's most prestigious universities, yet many of our buildings are not wheelchair accessible. Often no one thinks this is a necessity. Joyful Noise demonstrates how much people with disabilities can achieve, and that they, too, deserve access to our halls of learning.



Photo by Yale Institute of Sacred Music

Marguerite Brooks holds the mic as Kevin Jackson sings "Unchained Melody" in Providence



Photo by Edward Dwyer

Allison Fromm, Joyful Noise's conductor, teaches her singers real musical skills. We in the choral field admire her high expectations, which are tempered by patience and love. Her singers listen to each other with respect, help each other, and radiate self-confidence. Their pride in their singing is visible and audible. It permeates everything! Audiences are surprised, moved, and clearly transformed by Joyful Noise's singing. We hear the quality of the silence in the room change from modest expectations to respect, gratitude, and awe.

At Yale we believe that singing in a chorus can transform everyone. Everybody can sing and should be allowed – no, encouraged – to sing. Joyful Noise spurs the rest of us to stretch beyond our own comfort level and embrace a larger humanity.

* Marguerite Brooks has led Yale University's graduate program in choral conducting since 1985. Conductor of the Yale Camerata and Yale Pro Musica and an active choral clinician, Ms. Brooks assisted Joyful Noise in ACDA conference performances in both Chicago and Providence.

Harlem Globetrotters Showcase Abilities

By Cathy Sonnenberg, Joyful Noise Associate Conductor



Photo by Kevin Jackson

Singers file onto the basketball court

On a sunny Saturday afternoon in March, 20 Joyful Noise members arrived at Trenton's Sun Center, full of anticipation. Thrilled to be singing the National Anthem at a Harlem Globetrotters basketball game, singers were escorted past the Globetrotters players' practice session into a locker room where they, too, warmed up for their performance on the court. Singer Todd Emmons glowed, "It was a dream to shake hands with some of the basketball players!"

When Joyful Noise began to sing, a hush came over the arena. The crowd stood in awe, waiting for the anthem to reach its final note, and erupted in cheers. Sathya Prabhakar proudly reminisced, "The singing was good....that made my day!" The choir then took seats in the stands to watch the game together. Singer Lisa Fay laughed, "The Harlem Globetrotters were SO funny! It was awesome singing the national anthem for them!" Elene Kurtzman, mother of Jodi, reflected, "The benefit to each singer in both achievement and enjoyment was evident and heartwarming. The focus was on their abilities, not their disabilities." Participants and audience members alike will remember this event for years to come.



Photo by Kevin Jackson

Joyful Noise leads National Anthem at Harlem Globetrotters game

Help Joyful Noise

To make a tax-deductible contribution to help Joyful Noise travel to sing at Yale, please visit our website or contact Cathy Sonnenberg: (215) 771-1003 or cathy@joyfulnoisechorus.org. Joyful Noise is a 501(c)(3) hosted by Bancroft in New Jersey & Delaware. Contributions in any amount are gratefully received. Checks made out to "Joyful Noise" may be mailed to:

Joyful Noise Singers, Inc • 17 Springbrook Road • Morristown, NJ 07960

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Photo by Kevin Shea

Providence Singers Draw TWO Standing Ovations

By Mariann Granrath, Joyful Noise Parent

On February 17th, after six hours' travel by car, bus or train, 32 exuberant Joyful Noise members arrived in Providence, Rhode Island to rehearse and perform at the American Choral Directors Association's 2012 Eastern Conference. Their positive energy was contagious! As the core of the groundbreaking ACDA Festival Choir for singers with disabilities, Joyful Noise was joined by singers, choral conductors, and music therapists from New England, as well as by their beloved composers and guest conductors, Alice Parker and Nick Page.



Photo by Edward Dwyer

Elizabeth Nolan helps Nick Page lead "Do You Shine?"

Conductor Nick Page praised the singers for connecting so beautifully with their audience, "That was the longest ovation I have heard at an ACDA convention...the singers were brilliant." Jeffrey Douma, director of Yale University Glee Club, remarked, "I thought the group's performance in Providence was beautiful, uplifting, and inspiring. I was especially taken with the gentleman who sang 'Unchained Melody.'" Kevin, whose solo moved many in the audience to tears and elicited the first standing ovation, commented, "This was a new experience. My favorite part was singing 'Unchained Melody.' I was scared at first when Nick Page started playing the chords. Leslie recommended that we dedicate a song to George. And Kenny's conducting was like Beethoven's!!!"

Joyful Noise member Alex Siegel recalled, "I felt very good about myself up on the stage. I felt confident; I was comfortable. I had a great experience. My favorite part was the singing: it was a magical moment. I went up there and conquered my fear." As their performance concluded, the singers received a second long, cheering and standing ovation. One teacher in the audience told me, through tears, that she wished she could get a video and show it to her students at home. Bancroft staffer Joanne Shea mused, "it was a FABULOUS concert. Maybe not musically perfect, but more tear jerking perfect!" This adventurous, musical excursion changed the lives of many who were a part of it: both singers and listeners. Thanks to all who made this fabulous trip possible!



Photo by Marshall Kurtzman

Leslie Weeks sings a solo

Save the Dates

- Friday, May 18, 2012, 5:00 PM, **Bancroft Pediatric & Adolescent Spring Carnival**, Challenge Grove
- Saturday, May 19, 2012, **Retreat w/Manoj Govindraj**, Holy Saviour Campus, McDaid Hall, Westmont, NJ
- Saturday, June 16, 2012, **Yale Send-Off Concert in Memory of George Laika**, First United Methodist Church, Moorestown, NJ
- June 21-22, 2012, **Yale International Choral Festival**, New Haven, CT, major sponsor: Wild Rock, WV
- Saturday, September 22, 2012, **Bancroft Day**, Challenge Grove, Cherry Hill, NJ
- Saturday, October 27, 2012, **DFRC Holidazzle**, The Grand Opera House, Wilmington, DE