

A Note to My Church Choir

By Dr. Randall Bradley

From my experience, listening to beautiful sounds in no way takes the place of participating in making these sounds. For me, the communal aspect of making music in the moment, a moment that can't truly be replicated, is the essence of choral singing. For in that moment, our bodies are fully engaged in producing sounds, our ears are saturated with the beauty of the voices of those around us, we are safe and secure surrounded by our friends whom we love and who love us, and our hearts are filled with the deepest gratitude imaginable for the sheer grace of being alive to experience this profound moment in which heaven stoops to meet us and we are transported to a higher plane – a plane in which too few are fortunate enough to access on earth. For me this fully-alive sense of being, this knowing that you were created for such a transcendent moment leaves us changed – we are never the same again.



For those who have spent a life time singing with others, we have been privileged to access such moments in performance and even more often in rehearsal. These times when all is right with the world and the cares of everyday life are suspended is what I am missing these days.

It is the reason that my heart has a gaping hole this week that can't seem to be filled with anything else. It is the reason that I need a community with whom to make music – a place where I can move outside my personal grief and share it with others who love me and whom I love. I have come to the place in my life in which I believe that life is too difficult to live in isolation, and our burdens must be shared with others; yet, this week, isolation is the place where we find ourselves, and it hurts.

I long for the day when choirs sing again, when congregations gather in to combine their humble voices with others, when burdens are shared with real pulsing bodies in close proximity to our own, when the mysterious act of singing together in congregation and choir is again normal. Furthermore, I am hopeful that when this day comes again, and I know it will, I, and you, will approach these experiences as the grace gift that they are and have always been.

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