



NASHVILLE IN HARMONY

2009-2010

Annual Report

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## **Director's Annual Address**

*Delivered by Don Schlosser on May 23, 2010 at the annual Celebration Dinner*

### **"Dream Big"**

I am not a photographer. I don't even own a camera, and my cell phone certainly won't take pictures. But when I think back over the past year with you, there is an album of snapshots that come to mind:

- In the sanctuary of Second Presbyterian Church during our first performance of last season after only three rehearsals
- Surrounding the Glendale Baptist sanctuary at Laura Kendall's memorial service with little yellow Post It notes on your backs
- Crowded around the salad bars at Whole Foods singing "Build Me Up, Buttercup"
- The kickoff in January when we were packed like sardines in the basement at Glendale
- Packed into the upper deck at Past Perfect crooning show tunes
- Packed again lined up in the hallways before singing at Edgehill
- Gathered in the back of the Ballard High auditorium with your garment bags and your props and your enthusiasm
- Dyson Schaible in a tutu
- Daniel Spohr and Jen Tlumak and the NiH clogging team
- The YMCA Santas
- The sextet of bathing beauties

It has been an amazing year.

- First time we've had 100 singers
- First time we've sold out the Ingram
- First time we've received an invitation to sing on the stage of the Schermerhorn
- First time we've had flash mobs
- First time we've had an away game
- And two amazing finale concerts

This occasion this evening is to celebrate those shared achievements and to express appreciation to the people who made those successes possible.

We are all very grateful to Claire Miley, to the board, and to the chorus leadership for the incredible amount of work they have done this year. Unless you're on the board, you're probably unaware of some of the organizational hurdles we have cleared this year. I'm telling you, particularly this year, it's a good thing we had a couple of attorneys at the helm.

We are also especially indebted this year to those who have worked with development, notably Laura Valentine, T. Morgan, Kerry McCalla, and JT Collins. For the first time we

were recipients of a Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission grant, and we are poised as never before to secure sustaining financial support to allow us to achieve our mission.

I don't want to minimize the work of the board or the work of the development team, but the real genius of this phenomenon called "Nashville in Harmony" is that – this year, like every year before – our success cannot be attributed solely to a few visible people in elected positions.

We have flourished again this year because of you – all of you. Because Jeff and Anne and Bev moved risers, and Julie bought merchandise, and Daniel laid out programs, and Brian invented hanky-ography, and Lynn stamped music, and Amanda played her trumpet, and Matthew cooked chicken, and Susan picked up Jersey Mike's, and Madonna sold CD's, and MAT managed the lobby, and because of the green bean team, and on and on. We flourished this year because you showed up for concerts and rehearsals and bonus rehearsals and sectional rehearsals and meetings, when you were worn out, when it was raining, when you really could have been doing something else. You showed up, because all of you were emotionally invested and passionate about what we're about.

So, tonight is not about thanking a few people. It is about thanking you, all of you.

A couple weeks ago the Concert Planning Team met at OutCentral, where we have our NiH offices, to run through a final checklist for the performances in Louisville and here at Ingram. We walked through every detail of the program flow, the lobby organization, the technical concerns, and the stage arrangement.

And then because we always have to be looking farther ahead, we had some good conversations about this fall, and next spring, and the summer of 2012, and the spring of 2014. Some really exciting and some very ambitious ideas surfaced, and we all got pumped dreaming about where Nashville in Harmony could be by the time we celebrate our tenth anniversary season.

There really was a tangible energy as the team left the center and started walking back to our cars. Rodney McCasland and I were walking up Church Street. We came to the corner, wished each other well, I turned up 17<sup>th</sup>, and Rod continued down Church. As I got halfway up the block, I heard a voice call back to me: "Dream big," he yelled.

I turned in the dark and saw Rod in the distance. And I smiled. "Dream big." If we're going to be serious about our mission, we have no other option. We have to dream big."

That's what the Dream Café was all about – dreaming together to create our best future. The NiH leadership is still processing through the feedback from the Dream Café, but I can already tell you we have some exciting days ahead.

For the first time ever, this next season we are going to be performing in TPAC's Polk Theater on December 16 for our holiday performance called "Twisted Tinsel." We are also in the process of exploring the possibility of our first performance tour for next spring. Then for the summer of 2012 there is talk of going to Denver to sing for the GALA conference. And there's already a lot of energy around the possibility of an NiH Invitational Festival in Nashville in 2014 in which we celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary season by sponsoring an event here and inviting choirs from all over the region.

After last night, anything seems possible. You do not want to miss a single season. "Dream big."

Second, "Cherish the harmony."

The second phrase in our mission is "to build community," so when I say, "Cherish the harmony, or stay home," I'm not talking about tuning chords. I'm talking about our community – the sense of family we cherish in this group. I am reminding all of us how unique that is, how valuable that is, and how fragile that is.

I chose the word "cherish" because it speaks to me of valuing something and protecting it. Even if we were to double in membership and win a Grammy, if we lose our sense of family, we've lost everything.

Please be careful. Be gentle in your speech. Be positive in your comments. Be caring in your relationships. Be patient in your frustrations. Be slow to take offense. Be honest in love.

And I'm not just talking about inside these walls. It is the responsibility of every one of us to protect that harmony outside these walls. Be careful what you say in the clubs or to your friends. Negative comments can easily do more damage than sloppy rhythms or bad pitch.

"Cherish the harmony."

Third, "Embrace the mission."

Just a reminder about why we do what we do. Like you, I look forward to that day when people come to hear us, **not because we're a gay choir, but because we're a great choir.** I pledge to you that I will continue to work hard, study hard, and bring my best talents to bear. But let us continue to challenge each other to remain focused on changing our community – first in Nashville, then in our state, our country and our world.

As long as there are young men being thrown into jail in Malawi because they choose to love each other, we will – no, we *must* – continue to sing.

So, if you are ready, with me, to embrace the mission, to cherish the harmony, and to dream big, together we can create our best future.

“A sound of hope, a sound of peace, and sound that celebrates and speaks what we believe: a sound of love, a sound so strong. It’s amazing what can happen, when we share a song. This is why we sing.”

Sometime in the late 60’s or early 70’s, John Lennon was reading some poetry written by his wife, Yoko Ono, who had grown up in post WWII Japan. One word caught his attention, “imagine,” and a classic piece of Rock history was born.

“You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one.”

Thank you all for a great season. I look forward with you to a great future.

## **President’s Annual Report**

*By Claire Miley*

Our goal in 2009-2010 was to “Sing Out,” to extend our mission further than we have in the past, both to our fellow choir members and to the community-at-large. I am fortunate to have presided as President of Nashville in Harmony during a year when *everyone* in our choir, from our board members to our choir leadership to our dedicated choir members, took the laboring oar to guide us toward this goal. When someone mentioned to me the idea of recognizing “Volunteers of the Year” at the Celebration Dinner held this past May, I and others on the board quickly realized that recognizing any one person would overlook all others who have worked so hard. Truly, as I said at the Celebration Dinner, we were all “Volunteers of the Year” in 2009-2010.

### *Strength in Numbers*

We started and ended the year with over 100 hundred members, the first time we’ve broken triple digits. Our members come from all walks of life and have so many diverse talents that it’s hard to capture them all in our weekly “member morsels” in the eBlast.

One of our “Sing Out” goals in 2009-2010 was to provide more opportunities for our members to get to know each other and to foster the internal cohesion and sense of family that is so important to our NiH culture. Just as we reach out to the community, so we must reach out to each other. In 2009-2010 we instituted a series of social gatherings, or “Encore” events, held after Sunday rehearsals and at other times to give members the opportunity to exchange conversation and concerns.

And we supported each other like a family. Whether it was assisting choir members who underwent surgery, or who were affected by the flooding in May of 2010, or who simply

needed help moving into a new house, we were there for each other. With our strength in numbers, we can accomplish anything.

### *Reaching Out to the Community*

We extended our mission into the community-at-large in a new way last year. We took our first-ever road trip, traveling to Louisville, Kentucky in May of 2010 for a joint concert with Voices of Kentuckiana, and then we hosted Voices of Kentuckiana the following week here in Nashville. The collaboration was especially meaningful since it came on the heels of the devastating May floods in Nashville. Voices of Kentuckiana generously donated a portion of the proceeds of its cash raffle to our community partner, the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. And we found that giving truly begets giving. The audience member in Louisville who won the cash raffle prize stood from her seat and shouted, "Give mine to Nashville!"

NiH did two benefit concerts for Edgehill UMC, helping to raise money to retire the mortgage on a building that is to house a new ministry with teen parents. An anonymous donor then matched the generous donations from NiH, doubling the gifts. NiH also sent smaller Sing-Out teams into the community – in November, our teams visited Green Hills Nursing Home and Bordeaux Nursing Home. We participated in World AIDS day by giving a free concert at the Renaissance Center in Dickson, Tennessee in December.

### *Getting Noticed*

Our passion and dedication to using music to build community and create social change are getting us noticed by a broad range of grant organizations. We received our first ever grant from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee and also received a nearly 50% increase over the prior year in our grant amount from the Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission.

Our artistic excellence earned us a rave review in *Nashville Arts* magazine for the *Jingle This! Concert* and an invitation to perform at the *Regions Free Day of Music* on the main stage in Laura Turner concert hall at the Nashville Symphony. Although our plans were disrupted by the May floods, none of us will ever forget the jubilation we felt on the day that we got the invitation. Remember the party upstairs at "Past Perfect"? And let's also not forget that we had our first sell-out concert at Ingram Hall in 2009-2010!

The people most responsible for our artistic excellence, of course, are our irreplaceable director, Don Schlosser, and our wonderful accompanist, Bob House. These guys are not paid nearly enough for all they do. We should give them a grateful hug every time we walk by them.

### *Gratitude*

Finally, I want to thank all of my fellow Board members from 2009-2010 – Kerry McCalla, Beth Thorneycroft, JT Collins, Mark Manasco, Bev Clendenen, Melissa Starchild, Rose Mary Drake, and Eric Tyson. You guys are tremendous, and I deeply appreciate your support. I also want to thank our choir leadership – our section reps (Joy Strange, Daniel Spohr, JT Collins, and David Thacker), our membership coordinator Linda Ray Miller, our librarian, Lynne McCalla, our hospitality director Susan Hawes, our historian Rodger Murray, and our Webmaster Brian Koho. And to our hard-working Fifth Section members and choir members, thank you!

We have laid a wonderful foundation to go forward into the 2010-2011 season. Let's join hands and continue to use music to build community and create social change. In 2010-2011 our theme will be "A Home For All"!

#### Publicity/Media Report

*By Eric Tyson*

For fiscal year 2009-10, Publicity oversaw the media and marketing of NiH events. Common to both the "Jingle This" and "All You Need Is Love" concert seasons were the production of press releases, posters, business cards, postcards, concert tickets and programs. We were able to secure advertising sponsorship from Graffiti Indoor Advertising and Comcast Spotlight, for which we oversaw the production of a public service announcement for both shows.

The spring concert saw the production of our first all-color concert program - our best looking program to date. We will attempt that again, provided we can attract enough advertisers. Publicity also got the word out about the vocal interviews via press releases, posters, concert ticket backs, etc. FY 09-10 also saw the implementation of Vertical Response, a mass mailing to people on our mailing list, as well as the development of a Facebook page.

#### Fifth Section Report

*By Bev Clendenen*

We were fortunate to have 20 active "5th section" members in 2009-2010. These dedicated non-singing members helped NiH in innumerable ways, from setting up and staffing our kick-off luncheons, to hauling our risers to our concert venues, to manning merchandise and ticket tables in the lobby at our concerts.

#### Development Report

*By JT Collins*

In the year 2009-2010, contributions through corporate sponsorships, grants and individual gifts exceeded expectations (budget) by 7% in spite of a weak economy that had many companies cutting their normal contributions to charities.

Although contributions were strong, the development committee and the NiH board looked for ways to expand our grant options and corporate sponsorships. We recognized the necessity of having a long term strategy to communicate to potential partners and to help guide our growth. After interviewing several facilitators, NiH hired Deborah Palmer George through the Center for Non-Profit Management to lead us through a visioning and strategic planning process. It was important to us to hear every voice of the choir in this process so we designed the process to include a multi-faceted approach to collecting information from the choir at large. **With Deborah's help, we organized a Dream Café** where all choir members were invited to participate in developing long-range visions. We also distributed a survey to those not able to attend the Dream Café. Deborah led the NiH board through two more planning sessions following the Dream Café in order to take all of the dreams collected and distill that information into a set of guidelines to use in the coming years as goals are set and plans are made for future activities and performances.

The result of our Dream Café initiative will help NiH communicate to other organizations the level of our maturity, our prospects for growth, and our dedication to the task of building community for the purpose of creating social change.

[see next page for 2009-2010 financial report]

Financial Report  
2009-2010

FY 2009-10	Budget	Y-T-D
<b>Revenue</b>		
<b>Earned Income</b>		
CD Sales	\$1,500	\$825
Concert Ticket Sales	\$12,000	\$14,698
Concert Ad Sales & Sponsors	\$1,500	\$2,750
Membership Dues	\$9,000	\$9,475
Merchandise Sales	\$500	\$234
Performance Honoraria	\$0	\$0
	<u>\$24,500</u>	<u>\$27,982</u>
<b>Contributed Income</b>		
Corporate Gifts	\$5,000	\$5,200
Gift of Music	\$3,000	\$2,684
Grants	\$5,000	\$6,600
Individual & Civic Gifts	\$6,500	\$7,341
	<u>\$19,500</u>	<u>\$21,825</u>
<b>Restricted Income</b>		
Flood Relief		\$417
Performance Attire	\$2,000	\$3,681
	<u>\$2,000</u>	<u>\$4,098</u>
	<u>\$46,000</u>	<u>\$53,905</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>General Program Expenses</b>		
Accompanist	\$4,600	\$5,002
CD/DVD Music Rights	\$1,500	\$95
CD/DVD Reproduction	\$1,000	\$0
Performance Licenses	\$0	\$430
Celebration Dinner	\$900	\$1,400
Fundraising	\$600	\$349
GALA Dues	\$0	\$0
Member Recruitment	\$650	\$85
Merchandise for Sale	\$500	\$917
Miscellaneous	\$250	\$225
Music Director	\$9,000	\$9,000
Flood Relief	\$0	\$417
Performance Attire	\$2,000	\$3,416
Pride Booth	\$350	\$125
Rehearsal Space	\$0	\$200
Risers	\$0	\$0
	<u>\$21,350</u>	<u>\$21,661</u>
<b>Holiday Concert Expenses</b>		
Marketing & Advertising	\$600	\$1,159
Miscellaneous	\$450	\$261

Music	\$3,000	\$2,845
Musicians	\$500	\$320
Other Entertainers	\$0	\$0
Other Show Elements	\$250	\$762
Printing	\$950	\$659
Sound & Lighting	\$0	\$0
Venue Rental	\$1,400	\$2,140
Reserve Venue - 2010		\$1,750
Video & Sound Recording	\$800	\$750
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	\$7,950	\$10,646
Spring Concert Expenses		
Marketing & Advertising	\$600	\$1,454
Louisville Collaboration	\$2,500	\$320
Miscellaneous	\$600	\$409
Music	\$3,000	\$3,349
Musicians	\$500	\$450
Other Entertainers	\$0	\$200
Other Show Elements	\$250	\$59
Printing	\$1,000	\$2,883
Sound & Lighting	\$0	\$0
Venue Rental	\$1,400	\$0
Video & Sound Recording	\$800	\$950
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	\$10,650	\$10,075
Administrative Expenses		
Credit Card & PayPal Charges	\$600	\$738
Equipment	\$150	\$0
Internet & Software	\$150	\$96
Meeting Expenses	\$700	\$833
Consulting Expenses	\$0	\$720
PO Box & Postage	\$100	\$95
Office Space	\$3,500	\$3,000
Printing & Supplies	\$600	\$361
Insurance	\$0	\$987
Tax Preparation & Fees	\$0	\$140
Utilities	\$250	\$0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	\$6,050	\$6,970
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	\$46,000	\$49,352
Net Revenue	\$0	\$4,553