
PHOENIX

CHAMBER CHOIR

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May 19, 2013 - 8:08pm -- Anonymous (not verified)



PHOENIX HAD SOME
GREAT YEARS LEADING
UP TO SEASON SIX, BUT
1988-1989 WAS SIMPLY
EXTRAORDINARY, EVEN FOR PHOENIX –
TRULY UNFORGETTABLE.

But, it started off normally enough with a fall retreat at Deb's cabin at Brunswick Beach. We welcomed back Grant Rowledge for his first full season with us and we also welcomed Rob Hollins to Phoenix for the first time. Now one of our veterans, Rob has sung with us continuously to this day. And what a great surprise when Rosemary made it to retreat, straight from the hospital, with her brand new baby girl, Iona. Now, that's dedication!



Fall
Retreat
1988

CBC, being a longtime supporter, had featured Phoenix on many radio programmes over the years, but in November, they decided to commission a recording of Phoenix singing a collection of Ron Smail's pop arrangements. Our first commercial recording! It was released on cassette tape (remember those?) and was titled "With a Song in My Heart". Ron even flew out from Montreal to take part in the recording sessions. Then it was our busy Christmas season once again, with concerts at Isadora's restaurant on Granville Island, caroling, and singing on CBC's Early Edition Christmas Eve show. Was this the year that they had a guest on the show demonstrating alcoholic blender drinks? Nothing like a little Christmas cheer before 7am! In January, Deb's cabin was no longer available to us so we held retreat at Bill and Barb's new house that, coincidentally, had been purchased on the way to a Phoenix concert the previous spring!

In February, we prepared our performance tape that would represent Canada in the EBU's "Let the Peoples Sing" Competition to be judged in Helsinki, Finland in May. We placed second in the Chamber Choir category in the previous EBU competition, so we had high hopes for a good showing! While we were anxiously awaiting the results, Phoenix life continued. Also in February, we performed for North Vancouver Educators at the Centennial Theatre. And, In April, we headed out to take part in the Harrison Festival of the Arts fundraiser in Harrison Hot Springs.

That spring, we also shot some new promo photos in our purple choir gowns. This is how our long time connection to the colour purple began!



One of our members, Stephen Grant, was about to leave the choir to be married and move to Toronto. But before he left, he had the brilliant idea of hiring (then) aspiring artist, Joe Average, to create the art for our Spring concert, based on Elliot Carter's piece "Musicians Wrestle Everywhere".

This spring also brought one of the oddest - and best paying - gigs Phoenix ever did. We sang at the opening of an International Symposium on Biliary Lithotripsy (which is, of course, a treatment for gallstones. You knew that, right?) The doctor who hired us was a real character and asked us to sing a pop song he had rewritten, which became "There will Never Be another...Stone". It was, apparently, the funniest thing these doctors had ever heard. And...Phoenix went away much richer. In May, we finished our concert series in Abbotsford, performing as part of the Pacific Coast Music Festivals Association.

Finally, the moment we had been waiting for all season had arrived. The announcement of the winners from the EBU Let the Peoples Sing Competition, on June 6th, 1989. Fifty choirs representing the best that eighteen participating countries had to offer were entered into the competition and...PHOENIX WON! We won the prestigious (and MUCH coveted) **BBC Silver Rose Bowl** for **best choir overall** AND we placed first in the **Contemporary Music category** and were awarded the **Hungarian Radio Trophy**.

Unbelievable. To this day (some 25 years later) no other Canadian adult choir has won the Silver Rose Bowl.

Of course, a huge celebration was held immediately at a local restaurant (Mexican, naturally) even though we wouldn't be presented with our trophies until the following December. Cortland gave a speech to the choir that brought tears to our eyes.



Our sixth season wrapped up with a July pool party at Cort's and our fourth Beer BBQ at Spanish Banks. It was an amazing year – one to remember forever.

In 1988/1989 Phoenix was...

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors	Basses
Margaret Barry	Charlene Gallaher	Dennis Colpitts	Rob Hollins
Sheryl DeCoste	Deborah Mehes (Gibson)	David Cousins	Paul Nash
Rosemary Lister (Lindsay)	Barb Paul	Stephen Grant	Bill Paul

Josie Martens

Joy Smith

Giles Gysel

Grant Rowledge

Terry Horner

Stuart Tarbuck

Graeme Wearmouth

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Auditions!

Phoenix Chamber Choir will be holding auditions for new members on Tuesday, August 7th, from 7-9pm at Holy...
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Jun 26, 2018

Thank you Graeme!

Under the direction of Dr. Langager, Phoenix Chamber Choir has: released 3 CD's; placed 1st in Adult Chamber... more



Jun 01, 2018

Thanks for a great season!

We're happy to report that we gave our concert last week to a very full house! We're so grateful to everyone... more

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