

Founding Music Director Robert Dueck
Bids Farewell to the West Ottawa Ladies Chorus
“Fond Memories and New Beginnings”

The spread of the coronavirus has led to the cancellation of many entertainment events, including the West Ottawa Ladies Chorus spring concert which was planned for April 25, 2020. Though the April farewell dinner was also not to be, I believe the event sentiments are very appropriate: ‘Fond Memories – New Beginnings’. Due to this global pandemic, the end of my tenure as the Director of the West Ottawa Ladies Chorus came to an abrupt end. Directing a final concert was not possible nor was the face to face opportunity to say goodbye, adieu, adios, auf wiedersehen, farewell to a choir family I continue to be so proud of. I have felt privileged to be its director for these last eight years and it’s difficult to find the few right words to express what needs to be said. And since I am not a man of few words, let me share a few parting comments in this my farewell speech.

Music is my life. Shortly after moving to Stittsville, the vision to start a community choir began as I wanted to get back to making music. The vision that began in the summer of 2010 resulted in the establishment of two community choirs in but a few years. The two-gender specific choirs are now added to the community SATB choirs already in existence. It’s so rewarding to see how the Arts & Culture community has been steadily growing at our end of the city. The interest in choral music is there as is evidenced by the most supportive audience this chorus receives concert after concert.

Important to me right from its inaugural year has been the steady focus to grow the WOLC for longevity. Today, this organization is a healthy and vibrant organization thanks to its members who, over the years, continued to grow the vision that would define the organization where performances have become known for their creativity, diversity of musical styles and artistic excellence.

I trust the hand-over of passion, love and enthusiasm for the great art of choral music will continue to inspire one and all as you move forward.

It has been a joy and privilege to be your music director. I think we would all agree that the individual singers who joined this chorus because they love to sing and have fun are most important to this organization. Each current and former member, singer or accompanist, has been part of this chorus because they enjoy being involved in choral music and the experiences that choral music brings.

Without hesitation, I can say that it has been most rewarding to plan and execute everything that is required for each term, to perform our repertoire for Sing Out audiences, and to experience the joyful reward of ending each term with a well-prepared and well-performed concert for a most appreciative audience. I shall always remember each singer in this current 2020 spring term for your friendship, the love you have for this your chorus, and for your support through this transition time as I leave the chorus I have so enjoyed. My sincere thanks to all of you as well as those singers who have retired from the chorus for a variety of reasons, and remembering the two members who have passed on.

In addition to being most grateful for the support from within the chorus year after year (along with several spouses and family members), I particularly want to thank those who served on the executive and provided leadership in various capacities.

On a personal note, the one who has stood with me through everything from the very start of my getting involved with music making in our community has been my partner, Brian. He is a huge support to me. The reason the chorus has so many songs uploaded onto its Youtube channel is thanks to Brian for being the videographer at many a concert over the years. And then there were his multi flavoured truffes. His hobby for baking and shared goodies with the chorus were always enjoyed by all. Thank you Brian.

In conclusion, all of this is to say that the West Ottawa Ladies Chorus is a great mosaic. The organization is an art-work of tiles with each tile fitting neatly into its place to create a beautiful whole. Every singer and every person associated with the organization is an essential part that goes into making this mosaic. It is with fond memories that I place my final tile into this mosaic. I am so proud of this choir and I love you all.

And now it's time for those new beginnings: a move from one side of the country to the other for Brian and me, and new leadership for the chorus. I wish you all the best as you move forward, and on that note – I say, 'Farewell'

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Dueck

WOLC Founder and Music Director

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