

Choir director marks 25 years

Claramella
Feature Editor

To say that Choir Director Lonnie Cline likes what he does for a living is like saying that fish enjoy water.

Cline has conducted choirs the majority of his life, starting before he was in high school. This year marks his quarter century of teaching at Clackamas.

"I started directing church choirs when I was 13 years old," said Cline. When I was in high school I was the student director of the choir. When I attended college at Idaho State University I was the student conductor for my sophomore, junior, and senior year, and was the only person to do that three years in a row."

But even while in the midst of college, Cline still found time to direct one, but two church choirs.

"On Sunday I would do the early service with the Lutheran church, then generally run up the street to direct a Methodist choir," he said.

It was at Clackamas, however, that Cline found his home, and Clackamas found their new director.

"Clackamas finally decided it was time to hire a full-time choral director," said Cline. "Up until then, they only had part-time teachers. I'm the only full-time choir director the college has had."

But the choice to teach at

Clackamas was not cut and dry.

"I had also been offered a position at the University of Arkansas," said Cline. "They wanted me to be the director of jazz studies."

The decision, according to Cline, had less to do with wages and tenure than it did with teaching opportunities.

"I ended up turning down the job

at the university," he said. "I had a really good feeling about Clackamas. Here I can teach classical and jazz, whereas at the university I could have only taught jazz."

In his time at Clackamas, Cline has taken his choirs far and abroad. The small European country of Estonia may seem like an odd choice of destination at first, but, as Cline explained,

it was perfect for the choir.

"Per capita more people sing in Estonia than anywhere else in the world," said Cline. "In '96 one out of every two people sang in Estonia."

While in Estonia, the choir also had a unique opportunity to perform.

"We were the first non-Estonian choir to be invited to sing in the Estonian World Song and Dance

Festival," said Cline.

On a later trip, Cline and crew were able to sing in Laulupidu, the world's largest choral festival. The choir they performed with "had about 30,000 people, and the audience was about half a million."

Besides traveling abroad, the new Niemeyer building, which has rooms acoustically designed for choirs, has been one of the biggest blessings to Cline and his choirs in recent years.

"In all the time I've taught here I've taught in classrooms, stairwells, and lobbies," said Cline. "And last year we finally got a facility. The difference is the choirs can hear themselves."

But now, just as he is beginning to see the serious fruits of his labor after 25 years of teaching, the question is how much longer does Cline plan to teach?

"I think I'll teach three more years total, including this year," he said. "If the Music Department wants me to come back part-time, I would do that. When I retire from full-time teaching I plan on working with my alumni choir."

Cline concluded by saying that the choral program at Clackamas was a group effort.

"Without the support of the faculty, staff, administration, Music Department, and my students," said Cline, "I would have never been able to make some of my musical dreams come true."



Jeff Sorensen Clackamas Print

Choir Director Lonnie Cline rehearses with his chamber choir in the new vocal music room of the Niemeyer Center. This is Cline's 25th year teaching at Clackamas.

Arthur Miller's 'All My Sons' set to premiere in November

Matthew Olson
The Clackamas Print

The Clackamas theater department's next production is Arthur Miller's "All My Sons." The play is about an American family dealing with the aftermath of WWII, and the death of one of their sons. The play will run on Nov. 10-12, 17-19 at 7 p.m., and Nov. 13 and 20 at 2:30 p.m. in the Osterman Theatre.

Arthur Miller, the playwright of "All My Sons," is most widely known for "Death of a Salesman." He's also renowned for his brief marriage to silver screen starlet Marilyn Monroe. "All My Sons" was his first commercially successful production, and the intellectual precursor to "Death of a

Salesman."

Set in a suburban neighborhood, the Keller family's home is the scene of all the drama, comedy and tragedy. Throughout the play the house is a constant witness to the unfolding complications between Joe, Kate and Chris Keller.

The lead of Joe Keller, the charismatic patriarch, is the duty of John Renner, the artist in residence at Niemeyer. Keller is heavily involved with the theater department, currently teaching an improvisation class, directing a one-act play, and helping out with the Clackamas Repertory Theatre's production of "A Christmas Carol."

Not to be confused with the Clackamas Repertory Theatre, "All My Sons" is a credited class for Clackamas students. All the actors

get three credits, and any stage hands or lighting technicians get one or two credits for their part-time work.

David Smith-English, the director and instructor, chose "All My Sons" because of the modern political situation. "We're in a war ourselves, so our parallels are worth looking at."

"I think you guys get it ... you guys seem to identify," Smith-English says of the play's commentary on war. The tragic ending of "All My Sons" exemplifies the complications for the families of fallen soldiers.

At the beginning of the production, a former student, Michael Gerber, was set to direct "All My Sons." Also a former artist in residence, Gerber had to leave the directorial duties to Smith-English early on. Two cast members had to leave the show as well, further complicating the play's

future. Fortunately, Smith English's 11 years of theater experience here at Clackamas enabled him to step in.

Though the play itself is most definitely a tragedy, the quick wit and humorous family interactions make

for a compelling script. The actors are aware of the depth and breadth of the content, and strive every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to give due credit to a pivotal piece of American theater.



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Left to right: Seth Wrubleski, Sarah Griswold, and John Renner rehearse for the upcoming play "All My Sons."

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