

The Chicken Soup Anthologies: by Flo C. Blake

Quite a history emerges from delving into its origins. In 1993, two motivational speakers—Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen—hatched an idea. They would compile stories gleaned from their audience members. These true-life recollections would comprise a unique compilation of heartwarming tales for a book. The title, “Chicken Soup for the Soul” seemed ideal.

Canfield and Hansen enthusiastically pitched the concept to 100 New York based book publishers. Their efforts promptly yielded them a hundred rejection slips.

Their “never-say-die” spirit prompted them to try a lesser-known publisher in Florida, who accepted the challenge. The first book would spawn a series of sequels that turned the brand into a major publishing industry phenomenon.

In 2008 the founders sold the company, which has continued to expand under industry giant, Simon and Schuster—currently the third largest international book publisher. Now translated into almost 50 languages, “Chicken Soup for the Soul” books’ readership reaches num-

bers exceeding 500 million. The current editor, Amy Newmark graces the front covers.

Although they also run TV and movie productions, the publishers churn out about a dozen new book titles annually. Each volume contains 101 stories from as many writers. Teams consisting of three proof-readers -- graduate journalism majors,--plus their supervisor carefully select the final submissions for publication.

Thus, last week, it seemed a true blessing for me to have landed a 1 ½ page story in their latest anthology titled “My Crazy Family.”

The entry concerns something amusing that my overprotective in-laws did years ago.

Chicken Soup’s publishers welcome individual submissions (sent via the publishers’ website) of true, first person accounts addressing certain pre-determined themes. Stories should be told in fewer than 1,200 words. Please see www.chickensoup.com for more details.

They do not accept manuscripts of entire books.

3 Rivers Chorale back from Carnegie Hall set to perform May 5

Judy Hoyle

IVN Contributing Writer

The chance to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City is the dream of thousands of singers across the country.

On April 15, that dream was realized for a handful of Illinois Valley residents, when members of 3 Rivers Chorale joined choral groups from around the world to perform two pieces by Ola Gjeilo in Carnegie’s Isaac Stern Auditorium.

On May 5, 3 Rivers Chorale will perform those two pieces and others in a Cave Junction concert titled, “To Carnegie Hall & Back.”

In addition, the chorale, accompanied by pianist Janet O’Donovan and a string orchestra, will also perform two other Gjeilo pieces from his Sunrise Mass, “Northern Lights” and “Identity and the Ground.”

Director Kate Campbell stated, “We will also perform a short work by Edward Elgar, based on one of the loveliest of his Enigma Variations, arranged in a choral setting by John Cameron.”

After submitting an audio recording, Campbell

got word last summer that the choir was invited to participate in the Carnegie Hall performance.

Two weeks ago, following a 5 day residency organized by Distinguished Concerts International, Campbell and 26 members of 3 Rivers Chorale joined 200 singers from around the world to perform as the Distinguished Concerts Singers International.

The residency included a chance to meet and work with Gjeilo and to work under conductor James Meaders.

“The first time we stepped into Carnegie Hall, on the morning of the concert, I felt amazingly privileged and a little overwhelmed at the beauty and acoustics of this venerable space,” Campbell said. “The sounds we made with the orchestra, our spot-on director and with Ola at the piano were magical. I got pretty choked up.”

Singers came from the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and around the United States.

They spent around 10 hours in rehearsal to prepare for the concert.

“I was very pleased at the level of preparation

that our singers were able to achieve. In some cases we were able to be leaders for some of the other choir members,” Campbell said.

The singers presented two Gjeilo pieces. “Dreamweaver” is the Norwegian composer’s new seven-movement composition that recounts an epic folk ballad describing a journey to the afterlife and back.

“This is musical storytelling at its best,” said Campbell, adding, “It was the first time that piece had been presented to an audience, a world premiere.”

They also performed his “Song of the Universal,” with text by American author and poet Walt Whitman.

“Ola loves the expansiveness and invitational spirit of the text,” Campbell said. “He wrote wonderfully soaring music to perfectly paint Whitman’s ideas.”

The May 5 concert will take place 3 p.m. at Immanuel United Methodist Church, located at 200 W. Watkins Street, near Shop Smart.

Admission to the Cave Junction concert is by donation.

A second concert will take place at Bethany

Presbyterian Church at 3 p.m. May 6. Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at Oregon Books and at the door.

3 Rivers Chorale is a non-profit, all volunteer choir supported by its members and board of directors, Illinois

River Valley Arts Council, Josephine County Cultural Trust, local businesses and music lovers.



(Courtesy photo for the Illinois Valley News)

Kate Campbell, 3 Rivers Chorale music director in front of Carnegie Hall as they begin rehearsals with composer Ola Gjeilo April 13.

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