



Charlie Crimes co-founded the Georgetown Choral Society with Ralph Ursel in 1970, although a choral society existed locally several decades earlier. Here, Mr. Crimes is seen conducting the still-new community choir in an early rehearsal.

New Choral president heads progressive exec

A five-year resident of Georgetown, Choral Society executive president Tyrone (Ty) Tutt had sung in a teen choir and played trombone in his youth, but hadn't thought seriously of maintaining his musical interests locally until a friend of his wife's described the town's community choir.

"The first practice I attended was the first time I heard them," Mr. Tutt told The Herald this week, recounting his three years with the choir, including a year as vice-president and his current term as president. Mr. Tutt heads an executive committee that also includes past president Joyce Hewson, director Dale Wood, vice-president Ed

Brennan, librarian Mary Lou Brock, treasurer Doug Cole, secretary Joyce Hayward, publicity director Barbara Ritchie, concert co-ordinator and attendance officer Carolyn Simmons and social convener Ellana Needham. All are Halton Hills residents with the exceptions of Mrs. Hayward and Ms. Ritchie, both Miltonians.

At that first practice he attended three years ago, Mr. Tutt discovered a group whose members clearly enjoyed their common interest in choral music. Having already learned to read music, the 10-minute audition he gave Dale Wood, "Oh Canada" is a popular song by which the director can determine the appli-

cant's range and singing ability) was "not overly taxing," Mr. Tutt recalled, and was perhaps even easier for him since the choir does need more male vocalists. While assisting Mr. Wood in his selection of music for the Society's two or three concerts a year, the executive busies itself with the more mundane matters involved in running a \$9,000 a year "business" that is generally happy to make just a small profit each season. High quality performances featuring fairly sophisticated and often challenging music is the Society's top priority, Mr. Tutt commented, but the members' own enjoyment of their activities must always be kept in mind.

A clear 'evolution'

Co-founder directs at Holy Cross

An ad placed in The Herald by local music buffs Charlie Crimes and Ralph Ursel was the first step taken in the revival of the Georgetown Choral Society ten years ago. What was formed as a "new" society choir in 1970 was actually a successor to a



choral society that existed here during the 1930s, according to some current members. Records of the original choir are hard to come by, however, and its surviving members were widely dispersed by the time Mr. Crimes approached Mr. Ursel about revitalizing the Society.

Mr. Crimes had been a member of several church choirs in his native England, which he left in 1952. For four years after his arrival in Georgetown, he served as director of the Christian Reformed Church choir and founded and directed the now-defunct Glee Club at Georgetown's Branch 120 of the Royal Canadian Legion. Mr. Ursel, Georgetown high school science and music teacher, responded enthusiastically to Mr. Crimes' idea that a community choir should be formed locally, and the two organized the 15 residents who turned out for an introductory

dinner hosted by the Rotary Club of Georgetown. Although Mr. Crimes is a Rotary member and Mr. Ursel still actively helps organize the annual Christmas treat for the club, the

Choral Society's recent involvement in this year's banquet was purely coincidental. Currently director of the 25-voice Holy Cross Church choir, Mr. Crimes acknowledges that today's Choral Society is taking on "more challenging" music than it did during his three-year tenure as its director. Dale Wood, he said, is a "very qualified musician" whose talents have helped the choir "evolve".

With a formal name, a new executive headed by Jack Pickup and a place to perform in, the Choral Society needed music that would fit its relatively sophisticated tastes while allowing members room to grow. Mr. Crimes and Mr. Ursel set off to Toronto to select music for the first concerts. A Christmas show boasted "Holy City" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah", as well as "Scarborough Fair".

Society director until 1973, Mr. Crimes recalls preparations for those first concerts being "a lot of work" for members, many of whom could not read music and were not particularly well-trained in voice. As well, he said, a few of the pieces selected were "fairly proficient". While clear in their ambition to achieve widespread popularity in town, the Society's prime motivation was the desire to have fun as a group.

Receiving proceeds from those first concerts were local senior citizens, chosen as the Society's beneficiaries because they often helped at the door selling tickets and serving refreshments. Mr. Crimes explained, however, that there's no apparent connection between that early liaison with the seniors and the annual seniors'

Ty Tutt acknowledges he's seen a lot of changes in the three years he's been with the choir, and like the others, credits Mr. Wood for implementing some sweeping improvements.

"The choir's a lot more professional now - it's been a marked change," he said, "and I think we're going to see a lot more of the same in the future. If we continue to get the publicity we've been receiving, we'll be able to penetrate the community more and build our audience. The executive works hand-in-hand with Dale selecting the music we'll be performing, but Dale is the principle mover. He's a genuine professional."

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Director played piano at age three, now teaches local kids that young

Continued from page A7

the Etobicoke Choir came to an end with its director, Barry Gosse, turning the tables to sit in on the Georgetown Society's first concerts as accompanist.

The Society has seen several accompanists come and go during Mr. Wood's five-year tenure: high school music instructor Ralph Ursel was replaced by Joyce Hayward (still a member), who in turn provided Cheryl Hauser, one of Mr. Wood's top local students, with an opportunity to provide accompaniment when she took a leave of absence in 1974. George de Klier and Howard Wendmark have also attended the organ and piano for Society concerts, and Mr. Wood himself often handles the task, but the job currently belongs to Jerry Van Wyck.

Mr. Wood recalls that the Society was "frantic" with worry over finding a new accompanist in time for the upcoming concerts, but members soon realized the ideal musician was nearby all the time. Now in his final year of organ at the U. of T., Mr. Van Wyck has been organist of St. George's Anglican Church in Georgetown for the past three years. Asked to evaluate the Society's role in the commu-

nity, Mr. Wood said he compares it to the Georgetown Little Theatre in terms of importance and popularity. The two groups' lengthy and ongoing struggle for more recognition among more citizens, he said, is only now overcoming its disadvantages in light of Georgetown's sports orientation, thanks to a large extent to the growing number of "city-oriented" residents who enjoy sharing the culture of fine arts.

HANDSCREDIT
The word "evolving" crops up more often than any other in discussions about the Society's progress over the years, and much of the credit for its accelerated evolution is handed to Mr. Wood by

choir and executive members.

"We've grown a great deal in size and we're undertaking more sophisticated concerts as an amateur group," explains Marilyn Mitton, now in her tenth year with the choir. "It's partly because of the various individuals' own efforts, but it has a lot to do with Dale Wood. Dale's really brought us along. He had a vision for us." Dale wants to educate people to the more sophisticated forms of music. It's a high aspiration, and we're obviously not going to win everyone over. The majority just doesn't want to hear classical music, but we do have to have that challenge," Choral Society president

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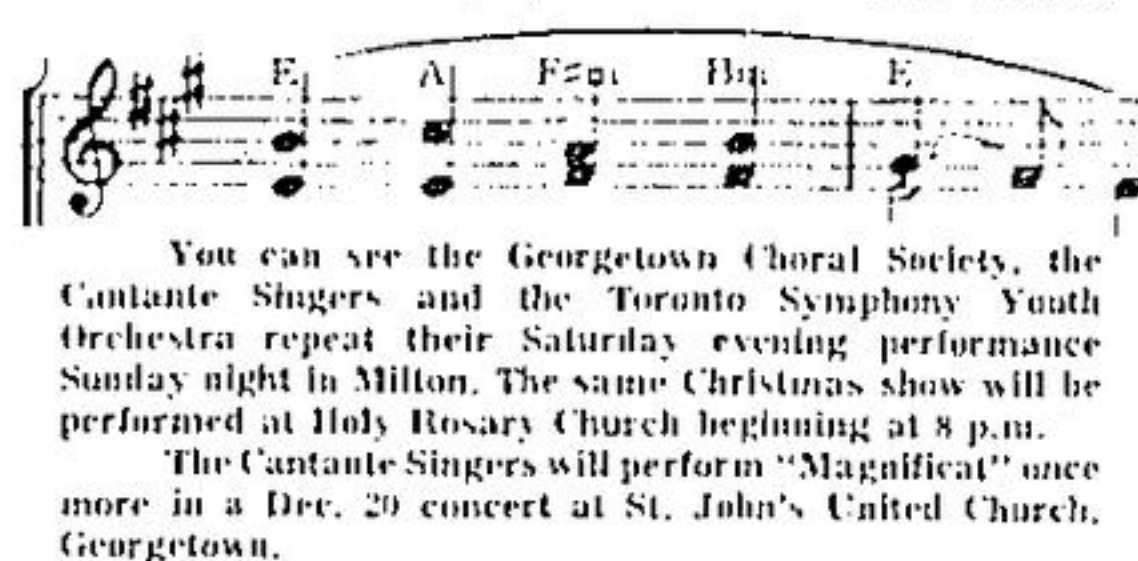
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You can see the Georgetown Choral Society, the Cantante Singers and the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra repeat their Saturday evening performance Sunday night in Milton. The same Christmas show will be performed at Holy Rosary Church beginning at 8 p.m.

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