

Chorale Members hard at work this holiday season:

By: Cameron Tyo

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During a Masterworks Chorale practice in December, members of the volunteer community choir shared their love for singing and excitement for the upcoming concert, "Magnificat: Holiday Concert," from 7:30-9:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 17, at High Street United Methodist Church.

Allison Humphrey, who has performed with the group for 15 years, said, she never thought she would sing after graduating from high school, where she participated in several choirs.

But in 2007 she moved back to Muncie and learned about the Masterworks Chorale. She auditioned, and she has been singing in the choir ever since.

"I'm with such a wonderful community, singing complex and beautiful choral arrangements," she said. "Everyone here is so friendly and welcoming to making the process of making wonderful music and even more joyous experience."

The Muncie Chorale began in 1978 under the name, East Central Indiana Community Singers, which four Muncie residents founded. From 1983-1987, the choir sponsored the Indiana Renaissance Fair, a major project in outreach, promotion, and fundraising. At this time, in 1986, the name was changed to Masterworks Chorale to better advertise the intention of the corporation. The group now amasses around 50 people of all ages. Auditions are a stress-free environment, and all you need to do is fill out a form with contact information on their website to schedule a brief audition with the Artistic Director.

After a season-long session of guest conductors, the chorale hired David Doyle as artistic director. The native of Rushville, Indiana, served the chorale from 1989 to 1994. In the five years he led the chorale, Doyle's musical sensitivity, broad knowledge of vocal music, and skill in vocal development in individuals and groups resulted in his and the ensemble's continued growth.

A series of artistic directors followed and continued to grow the chamber choir, which performs three seasonal concerts each year. The chorale has performed in venues such as Carnegie Hall and recently in 2016 they performed the symphonic *Middletown Chronicles: The Making of Middletown America* which was an event received and commissioned from the Indiana Bicentennial Commission, making it an official Bicentennial Legacy Project.

Since 2018, Kerry Glann was chosen and has directed the chorale in addition to his duties as associate director of Choral Activities at Ball State University. In 2017, the Chorale celebrated its 40th year anniversary.

Another member of the chorale, Richard Britten, said the chorale gives him a sense of belonging.

"It is very easy to find that feeling in a community ensemble," he said. "I also like sharing my love of singing with a variety of diverse people. I didn't spend much time in choir in high school as I was forced into it, actually, but I'm glad I was as it turns out it is one of my favorite things to do, which is why I'm here now."

Chorale member Angelina Hartcroft said, "I remember how easy it was to have a sense of camaraderie with people in high school because of choirs; hence I joined the choir in middle school, to begin with. I was bullied a lot, but singing helped me keep me always in a mostly positive attitude. As I'm older, singing now keeps me thinking about the natural physical pains I have every now and then and any bad memories I have, specifically about my husband's death.

Drew Albertson, one of the oldest chorale members said that "singing helps him forget the psychological struggles and PTSD he had from being involved in the Vietnam War as a young lad. Everyone's story is different, but they all join collectively to sing music and make people feel good about themselves."

Sally Kelley, the chorale's executive director, manages everything from organizing programs for the events as well as acting as public relations manager for the nonprofit organization.

"It is a joy to work with all the people in the chorale," she said. "I sneak into rehearsals to hear the progress made from time to time, and they always sound so lovely."

The chorale typically rehearses every Monday from 7-9:30 p.m. at Cornerstone Center for the Arts. Glann said members learn time and management skills, teamwork skills, a sense of confidence, networking opportunities, and much more.

"I love conducting and giving the singers notes and tips to improve," Glann said. "They always listen and improve upon what I tell them to do, and it shows during every subsequent rehearsal, especially the show."

All the members have expressed their excitement about joining the Ball State University Choral Union for the upcoming holiday concert. The night will feature music from Taylor Scott Davis, composer of Voces 8 and a prolific church musician, along with many beloved Christmas carols to celebrate the festive season.

Tickets are \$10 for their holiday concert and is from 7:30-9:30 p.m on Saturday, Dec 17th at High Street United Methodist Church. To learn more about the organization, go to [munciemasterworks.org](http://munciemasterworks.org). Keep up with the chorale on socials [@masterworkschoralemuncie](https://www.instagram.com/masterworkschoralemuncie) on Instagram and [@Masterwokrs Chorale Inc](https://www.facebook.com/masterwokrschoraleinc) on Facebook.