

## **Tom Foolery - Spring 2018**

Sarah and Jenny

Well, just as we had gotten through our welcome season and roast of our new conductor, and had gotten almost good at the “Fle-he-he-xibility” and “Sigh the tone” exercises, *but still a long way from having any clue about Solfege*, Tom is leaving us. We even had belatedly come up with (*...actually Pauline suggested it, and now she’s leaving us too!*) a title for our roast of Tom: “Tom Foolery”. It’s been fun, Tom, and we are very sad you’re leaving us. *But we totally get it. I’m tired by the end of rehearsal too and I’m not chasing after an ant-farm of little kids all day.*

*[Sigh together.]*

### **So we think maybe the little kids might have an edge on him with technology**

At the Dress Tom had an issue with his tablet. He said, “No!” as he is tapping away at the screen. “My students told me this works; a three finger tap...*[tapping more]*...No! It is magnified...One finger???” To which Georgette said, “Yes. The middle finger.”

Just last night, Tom acknowledged that it was Pauline, his senior, who introduced him to using a tablet computer.

To the women on Let Me Fly: “The difference from where we started; it sounds like music! It is the difference between Black and white TV and HD TV.”

### **His choice of music this semester caused some conniptions:**

In Feller From Fortune, on the Diddle dum deedle dee dum’s, Tom said, “My brain is literally in pain.” Steve reminded him, “You picked it!”

On Alleluia, Susan said during a sectional: “Make sure you are right on the words.” To which Gayle said, “Word.”

And in numerous rehearsals of the Alleluia, Tom would say, “Start on the Allelu...”

### **He could be sweet when giving us corrections:**

To the Basses regarding their entrance after the Tenors: “It’s not as tremendously off as it usually is.”

Lighthearted Lovers: “I have the sneaking suspicion you’re not agreeing in that F#. I just can’t tell.”

To the basses, on the Alleluia at the end, “Was that dinner or was that a note?”

When asking Sopranos to put some life into a held note, "I appreciate what you're trying to do. It's a nice clear sound, but it needs to have a little humanity in it."

Soon Ah Will Be Done, on our swells, "Don't overestimate your obviousness."

In Pace, to basses, "It was still late. Not as late as before but it's making everyone nervous. Maybe just me..."

Regarding tempo changes with the rubatos and ritards: "If you take away, you've got to give it back."

**But sometimes he leaned on the side of being more coercive**

Red, red rose: "We got one of the basses to come in early on measure 13, but I saw he got thoroughly chastised by Steven and others."

Swinging with the Saints, at the very end, trying to get us excited about it, "I really wanna go! Hope that's not what the audience says. 'I really have to go...' It's an older audience. *I* really wanna go get a beer, the concert's almost over."

On Soon Ah Will Be Done: "Tenors, I love your intent, but it got a little much."

To the Basses on Red Red Rose: "Bring that out. I mean, don't be obnoxious."

On In Pace: "Tenors the Gloria was way too loud. It's been getting louder and louder but that was Shocking!"

**Tom values having control**

On the Let Me Fly, he apologized: "Sorry I was playing so loud. That's what happens when you have no control."

When we all got up to shift back to old positions after rehearsing Exultate, "Was it something I said?"

Susan, too, during a part rehearsal on the Alleluia, after an alto had asked to hear their part, said to them: "Altos, just do it right."

At the Dress Rehearsal, when we flatted on the Alleluia, Tom had praise for the Soprano 1's: "I was so impressed with your control on that high A." To which Tracy said, "Well, it wasn't a high A by then."

**Death. Yes, death entered in.**

Very nearly for Seth today, when he repeatedly asked the Alto 1's to lower their racks (as in music stands).

After asking the basses to put some life into a held note, in In Pace: "Basses, it's sitting there like roadkill."

In Lighthearted Lovers to the Sopranos, who were falling behind tempo:  
“Apparently you’re not dying fast enough.”

Regarding measure 58 in In Pace, to the guys: “Was that an out of body experience?”

On Soon Ah Will Be Done to Sopranos: “Sing ‘I want tuh meet my Jesus’. Not ‘I want to’. Anyone who sings ‘To’ **will** meet Him soon.”

Soon Ah Will Be Done: “There’s gonna be some weeping if you don’t cut off.”

### **He was sometimes critical of his conducting**

One night Gayle asked, “Are you putting in a ritard, since we’re going to be repeating to the Da Capo?” Tom turned to us and said, “Isn’t that such a diplomatic way of saying, ‘What the hell are you doing’” [Sweetly] ‘Are you sure you mean to do that?’”

On Lighthearted Lovers, after messing up on conducting twice in a row [look carefully at both sides of our hands and arms]: “Who’s *are* these tonight?”

On Feller From Fortune, frustrated with our tempo: “You back off my tempo right away and I just give in to you. I only have so much life in this arm.” [Conduct speeding up.]

### **Tom could sometimes be a little flippant**

Soon Ah Will Be Done, “I’m going to do a Papal pardon on that one and come back to it.”

In the Sanctus, “Amber’s been singing a lot of the right notes. I’d like her to sit in the back. It would be good for her.”

In Feller From Fortune, after we’d worked intently on the diddle diddles, completely mired in getting the diddle **diddle** dees and tricky syncopation, an Alto stopped him in his tracks by asking if they were singing the right note. He chided himself, “So classic, you focus on one thing in life and bad things happen.”

“It’s all about color. But if you have the right color but you’re singing only forte’, who gives a crap?”

To Basses on the Alleluia, on focusing the really low passage at the end, “We’re not in doubt of your masculinity. So you don’t have to do more.”

In Pace, to the men, “I need some more lips in it” ...as in the sound!

To the men, asking them to stop and tune on a particular note in Swing Low, “Hold your swing!” [Mime]

To Soprano I's on an octave leap in Sanctus they were singing clearly but it sounded strained and uncomfortable, Tom said, "I appreciate what you're trying to do. I give you permission to let it be a little out of control."

While we were working on A Red Red Rose in sectional, Susan said, "After we've done the climax we'll come again."

**In the spirit of a roast, a few things struck us about the music and lyrics this semester:**

Tom was giving us hints of his departure in the songs and lyrics he chose for us. He had us singing about how love is fleeting and like Robin and Iris, people can be fickle. In spite of this, our music would suggest we, 'convert our sounds of woe (of which there are many with both he and Pauline leaving),' and 'let them go, and be blithe and bonny'.

I understand how taking on I Cantori, in addition to a full time job, being a husband and parent would be unsustainable. (I wondered briefly if he had a Plan B of getting us banned from the Mission by singing about diddling shady feller from fortune and ripping the arse out of our britches). He really spelled out his intension to leave having us sing night after night 'prayin' for a chariot to carry him home'. But still, we were slow on the uptake. He must have thought, "surely they will catch on" when they sing 'Soon Ah Will Be Done!'"

And so, as difficult as it will be for us, we must 'Sigh no more and Let Him Fly...with our gratitude for two wonderful concerts and the opportunity to learn for his devotion to excellence in choral music.

**And Pauline is leaving us, too**, retiring from rehearsal tedium and concert terror, after many more years than we can believe possible. Pauline, we are grateful for your phenomenal artistry, your perseverance with us, and your own sense of humor.

*[Back to group]* Pauline has been providing **us** with material for 20 years. These mostly are from the archives. Here goes!

At the beginning of one semester Sal introduced Pauline to the choir: "On the tour she was as Italian as I am. We are like Jewish and Italian." To which Pauline clarified, "No. You have sin, I have guilt."

Back in 2006, on Psalm 23 she said: "I think the dotted quarter leads one astray."

Another time she told us, "Really follow the markings, they will lead you in the right direction."

There was one night when Sal was away and Pauline took the rehearsal. During a piece by Schumann she said: "There is a huge cluster of chords. If you sing it with vibrato you will have a ...bigger cluster of chords."

On the Benjamin Britten piece, *Time*: "I think the hard thing is to make really good music out this."

In 2016, after a run-through of a piece in sectional she said: "Well! That was clear as mud! But since it was perfect, let's move on!"

While rehearsing a piece that got away, Sal said to Pauline: "Okay, I'm going to be with you and they can join us."

**Pauline sometimes didn't pull her punches. Indeed, over the years we've discovered that Pauline was an advocate of tough love.**

One unusually frustrating night, Pauline asked:  
"Sal, are you in the same score that I am?"

This year, when Tom inquired of her on how *O Mistress Mine* felt, Pauline, "My tow truck ain't working".

Another time, she said, "I think the basses have a reluctance to move it."

**The roast of the conductor** actually goes back to when Marshall Chatwin was watching the antics going on at the podium. I vividly recall one event that involved Pauline. Sal used to take out his briefcase and put it on the grand piano there next to him, and open the lid. Which blocked Pauline's view of him. So she would stand up and walk around the piano and close the lid. Marshall Chatwin presented Sal at one of these cast parties with a briefcase that had a lid he'd made a window in.

**Pauline was a recipient of many classic Salisms. Here are a few:**

Sal said, "Pauline, you do the men..." "...while I play with the Sopranos." Then to all the men Sal said: "Be with Pauline there. Do your part men! I'm going to have the piano play...uh...Pauline."

In 2014, on *The Evening Primrose*, Sal said,  
"Pauline will play with us and get us inebriated into the key."

Remember when in 2005 Sal asked Pauline: "*Full Monte, please.*"

**She had her own:**

Trying to get us to improve our rhythm accuracy, one night when she was leading the rehearsal, she said, "Shall we have the altos pulsating by themselves? ... How about the tenors pulsating with the altos?" and then... "What was a bass doing pulsating? ...I'm not surprised!"

In 2015, Pauline let us know how she felt about all this. Sal told the choir Pauline deserved applause. She had cut her finger: Sal told us, "She has it all bandaged up." He mimed wrapping his index finger [grab napkins and wrap our middle fingers], at which point, behind his back and her piano, Pauline quickly flipped us all off.

**With that, we'd like to send you both off in our own, personal, heart-felt, I Cantori Roast way:**

**[To the tune of "So Long, Farewell" from The Sound of Music]**

[start on a D]

There's a sad sort feeling in the songs of us singers, and the bells of the Mission too,  
And at M P C an obnoxious little cricket keeps chirping just to say 'Boo Hoo'  
(*echo*) 'Boo Hoo' "Boo Hoo.

Regretfully you tell us, you're leaving, 'Sorry Fellas'

We must say Goodbye,

(Boo Hoo)

To Yoooooou!

So long, farewell, au revoir, auf wiedersehen  
We'll miss you both, our tears we can't conta-ain

Deet diddle deet deet dee dee dee, Dweet doodle doot Doot doo

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye  
You leave and heave a sigh and say Goodbye

Deet dawdle do doo di-dle-dee, Deet diddle do doo dee

(*Poco a poco*)

We'll miss you both on Wednesday nights  
You'll be snug in bed, you cannot tell a lie

Deet dawdle do doo Di-dle-dee, Dweet doodle doot doot doo

(*Rit*)

We'll wring our hands and try to sing through sighs

So long, farewell, auf Wiedersehen, goodbye

(*Gesture everyone*)

Goodbye, goodbye, Goodbye!