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CHORISTERS REUNION CONCERT

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Current and former UK Choristers will present a joint concert in tribute to former Choristers director Sara Holroyd and in celebration of the 35th Anniversary of "A Shaker Worship Service" film and "Music of the Shakers" LP.

UK Choristers Reunion Concert
September 26, 4pm, Singletary Center for the Arts, Free

FROM THE UK SCHOOL OF MUSIC, SHAKERTOWN AND BEYOND: HOW COLLEGE CONNECTIONS CAN REACH FAR INTO THE FUTURE
BY WARREN COBB (85) AND RENEE COLLINS, (84)

In 1979, a historical landmark re-enactment of an original Shaker Worship Service was performed at Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill,

Ky., by the UK Choristers, the oldest performing organization on campus. Under the direction of UK professor Sara Holroyd and arranged by the late renowned recording artist and choral composer Salli Terri, this project was filmed to be broadcast on Kentucky Educational Television. It originally aired in 1980 and ran repeatedly throughout the early 1980s. The Shaker Worship Service continued to be performed at Pleasant Hill each year until Ms. Holroyd's retirement from the University in 1987.

This re-enactment was rehearsed and fleshed out in room 17 in the Fine Arts Building, a room Ms. Holroyd's students have since lovingly described as being holy and a sanctuary, so much so that they titled a song in its honor.

The impact of this short film and these seminal performances spread over the next 35 years beyond anyone's wildest imagination. Salli Terri's daughter, Jennifer Biggs Walton commented: "The first thing I thought after recently seeing this film was how wholeheartedly exuberant the men and women seemed to be. They are so removed from mainstream life but so free of the world's focus on negativity. 'Tis the gift to be simple."

Terri's husband, internationally known composer John Biggs, added: "I, indeed, watched the film with great interest and was really impressed by the choreography, sincerity of the performance, and the fact they memorized the entire score. It's a very moving performance and I'm really happy to have it in my collection now."

A grant from the Kentucky Humanities Council provided funding for the film and taping. These uplifting services were seen by thousands of people from all over the globe who came to visit Shaker Village for its historical significance, including then newly appointed Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Beyond that, the performers themselves were deeply affected by the experiences, carrying forward and sharing intimate memories with others to this very day.

This is evidenced by the Facebook group "UK Chorister Shakertown Memories," a closed group open to those closely associated with or who performed in the Shaker Worship Services. Membership is now more than 200 and growing. The original film is posted to the group along with pictures, music and programs. Even more interesting is the influx of heartfelt poetic accounts and memories expressed by the members themselves. Many still maintain contact and relationships with each other. All were fueled to succeed in life by the very essence of the Shakertown performances and the powerful life altering inspirational guidance of Ms. Holroyd.

Ms. Holroyd taught at the School of Music for 26 years. She was the director of Choral Activities and conducted the Choristers, Chorus, Chorale, Madrigal Singers and the women's and men's glee clubs. All this by a cornet player with no formal training in conducting.

That is the quintessential power of relationship building on campus. The importance of which can last for many years beyond the classroom and impact lives well into the future. The Terri family has been impacted. Ms. Terri passed away in 1996. In 1979, and her then two young daughters and husband remembered that a film was made but seeing it again at this point in their own lives proved to be most meaningful. They have all responded with deep gratitude and appreciation feeling this group breathes life back into Terri's music.

Many student success stories and life updates continue to pour in from those who are high school and university choral directors, Metropolitan Opera singers, music department heads, former Miss Kentucky winners, clergy, musicians, medical and legal professionals, and Ph.D.'s – all students of Ms. Holroyd and all attributing success in their professions to her dedication, unconditional love, support and musical discipline she

demonstrated during their education at UK.

The Facebook page also serves as a memorial for the families of the Shaker performers who have passed away – Vicki Cooper, Lori Stevens Diesman, Joe Barnett and Gina Scaggs Epifano. The Gina Scaggs Epifano Memorial Scholarship is now presented each year to an aspiring vocal student at the National Association of Teaching of Singers competition.

Ms. Holroyd turns 90 this year. What a joy it has been to help reunite her with so many students and people whom she affected so positively and who love her so dearly. Upon retiring in 1987, she left a collection of papers, photographs, letters and memories from her two decades at UK. It can be viewed in the Special Collections Department of the Margaret I King Library.

There is a rich heritage at the UK School of Music in the College of Fine Arts, where lives cross paths and remain connected far into the future as it has for the Shaker Worship Service performers from 1979. These are shining examples of what education and dedication are all about.

WARREN COBB RECEIVED HIS BA IN MUSIC. RENEE COLLINS RECEIVED A BACHELORS OF MUSIC EDUCATION.

AUDITIONS

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UK SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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- Oct. 08, 2015 - Oct. 10, 2015 [UK Opera Theatre Presents SOUTH PACIFIC](#)
- Oct. 09, 2015 [Appalachia in the Bluegrass - LEE BOY SEXTON AND HIS SON JOHNNY SEXTON](#)
- Oct. 10, 2015 - Oct. 11, 2015 [UK Opera Theatre Presents SOUTH PACIFIC](#)
- Oct. 11, 2015 [Hayden McNeal Organ Recital](#)
- Oct. 14, 2015 [UK Symphony Band & New Horizons Band](#)
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