

# Gwinnett Choral Guild performs at Vermont festival

## ART BEAT

HOLLEY CALMES



The Gwinnett Choral Guild is a volunteer arts organization, but sometimes its members receive a little something extra for their efforts like doughnuts and ice cream.

These sweet snacks were the icing on the cake of a June trip to Vermont, where the choral guild performed at the third annual Vermont International Choral Festival. Held in Stowe, Vt., the festival only invited seven groups to participate, and our own Gwinnett Choral Guild was one of them.

"The festival was looking for richness of sound and difficulty of the music performed," said choral guild music director Phillip Shoultz. "We sent part of our recording of 'The Messiah,' although we wound up performing multicultural items."

Shoultz was eager to participate in the event because of his admiration for the festival's director, Robert de Cormier.

De Cormier, a graduate of the Julliard School of Music, has not only worked extensively in choral and opera, but he was the music director and conductor for Harry Belafonte for many years. He also worked closely with



Special Photo

The Gwinnett Choral Guild performs at the Ben & Jerry's factory in Stowe, Vt., during the group's trip to perform at the Vermont International Choral Festival.

folk group Peter, Paul and Mary.

The festival consisted of 170 singers. Participating choirs came from Boston, Maryland, California, Long Island and Washington state. Each choir sang separately and also together as one mass choir.

After three days of intense rehearsals, the mass choir presented a concert on June 18 called 'Around the World in an Evening of Song' at the Trapp Family Lodge Concert Meadow outdoor amphitheater, said Gwinnett Choral Guild spokesperson Robin Fennell. The Trapp Family Lodge was once home to the von Trapp family, whose life was portrayed in "The Sound of Music," Fennell said.

The mass choir performed 19 selections, including songs of the Trapp Family Singers, African-American spirituals, songs of Jewish life, American folk songs and the Latin American mass "Misa Criolla." The concert

also featured a song by each individual choir; the Gwinnett Choral Guild performed a South African folk song with Artistic Director G. Phillip Shoultz III as soloist.

The Gwinnett Choral Guild's participation also included an individual performance for the community at the Stowe Community Church.

But it was the impromptu performances that earned them ice cream and doughnuts.

"We went on a tour of the Ben and Jerry's ice cream factory," Shoultz said. "I heard that if you sang for them, you got in free. So we burst into our South African folk song medley, and we really wowed them."

Later on, in Stowe, the group was waiting for a table in a crowded café and again felt the urge to share their talents. Shoultz once again said, "Let's sing!" They performed the same medley, and the café owner was so delighted that he gave every-

body a free doughnut.

Who says the arts don't pay well?

The Gwinnett Choral Guild invites anyone who would like to share these types of adventures to join them. Rehearsals for the new season started Tuesday, and they continue at 7:30 p.m. every Tuesday at Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church.

The first concert of the 2005-2006 season will be a collaboration with area high school choruses, held at 7 p.m. Oct. 1 at Snellville United Methodist Church.

The season continues with another seven concerts and events.

Shoultz encourages community participation. "We have a great diversity of music," he said. "Each concert is different from the one before."

For more information, call 404-223-9962 or visit the Web site at [www.gwinnettchoralguild.org](http://www.gwinnettchoralguild.org).

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