

John Bertalot's St. Valentine's Newsletter, 1994

"Has he crost us off his mailing list?" No, he hasn't! He's spent every minute of the last few months finishing his second book. (*"I didn't know he'd finished his first book!"*), as well as fulfilling his main job of directing the music of Trinity Church, Princeton, NJ, which gets more adventurous year by year, and currently teaching a course in composition at Westminster Choir College - it's great to be called 'professor'! - and also leading workshops all over the US and abroad. Life is bizzee and very fulfilling.

Sir David Willcocks wrote *"I look forward to getting a blow by blow account of the Bertalot saga, if I am still on the mailing list!"* He is, and so are you, dear 1,200 friends and relations all over the world - so, here goes:

SEPTEMBER

It was an privilege to be chosen, by the Arts Council of Princeton, as one of several musicians whom they wished to honor in this, their 25th year. The kudos that went with this was a handsome certificate, presented at a private dinner in the homes of the leading elite members of the Princeton Community, and then to enjoy an enormous party on a covered roof-top car park at the center of the town.

Also honored were Nancianne Parrella, who had just been appointed my associate organist at Trinity, and Mark Laycock, adventurous conductor of the Princeton Chamber Symphony Orchestra. Mark and I were wined and dined by Aristides and Pat Georg-



Aristides, Mark, Pat & JB

antas, distinguished and delightful friends since I first came to Princeton; both their children, Susie and William were in Trinity's choirs, and Aristides had chaired the committee which arranged the visit of the choir of King's College, Cambridge, to Princeton a few years ago. What a wonderful way to begin a new season!

OCTOBER

One of my greatest delights is to compose music - most of which is accepted for publication by over a dozen publishing houses in the US and UK! This month Aureole accepted my setting of *"All things bright and beautiful"*. John Rutter, watch out!

'Twas a delight to welcome Keith and Ruth Bond from England. Keith is former sub. org. of Blackburn Cathedral where we enjoyed a fruitful musical partnership. He and Ruth have retired to a village near Aldeburgh, Suffolk (Britten/Pears' former home), where Keith is acting organist of Aldeburgh Parish Church (where Ben and Peter are buried), and he is enjoying a career as a recitalist in England, Yurp, and the US. Keith played a short recital for us before our monthly Evensong at Trinity which was well received.

My current associate organist, Nancianne Parrella, also enjoys a national and international reputation as a superb organist. She has been Robert Shaw's chosen accompanist for years, and when she has to be away from Trinity she makes excuses such as, "I'm playing in Carnegie Hall!" which leaves me somewhat speechless.

Another of the delights I relish is to welcome choir-masters from various parts of the US who come to observe our choir practices at Trinity. This month, for a few days, we enjoyed the presence of Jeannie Kienzle, from Memphis, Tennessee. After she watched us rehearsing Langlais, Purcell, Handel, Duruflé and Byrd, etc., she commented, "I didn't realize that children could sing real music!" Would that more choirmasters did!

By the way, a particularly outspoken American friend upbraided me last year for making fun, in my Newsletter, of the Amurrikan accent. She feiled to nootiss that I also poked fun at the English one!

After K & R left I continued working at a commission to compose a setting of the "Jubilate" (Psalm 100) to celebrate Hedley Yost's 20th anniversary as organist of a church in Connecticut. Some members of his choir had found out that he liked my music, and so I had a deadline to meet which was getting ominously near. Hedley didn't know anything about the commission - the anthem was to be presented to him at a surprise party!

John Baker, a creative member of our choir steering committee, (CSC), who, in his spare time, is a Captain in the US Naval Reserve, had for some months, been planning to create a tape of the best of my compositions, which would be available to the unsuspecting musical public. It was made to celebrate my tenth anniversary at Trinity. At today's meeting he gave me his finished product, with 27 items sung by the three Trinity choirs, my Princeton Singers, Denver Cathedral choir and the superb choir of St. Wilfrid's School, Blackburn. I was bowled over by his gracious work, and the generos-

ity of the CSC, chaired by **May Papastephanou**, who sponsored it. Thank you!

Flew to Oklahoma to lead a 2-day workshop for choir-masters, organised by **Scott Raab**, organist of OK Cath. On the plane I thought about my Yost-Jubilate, which had turned out to be for S.A.B. and organ, even though I had intended it to be for full SATB choir. It suddenly occurred to me that it really would be rather nice to add a tenor part - which I did. It's a good thing that I did this for I later discovered that the chairman of the Yost presentation committee sings tenor in his choir!

October was proving to be an eventful month. (Most months are, here in Princeton!) I received a letter from Buckingham Palace - no, not an O.B.E! - conveying **The Queen's** good wishes for a major concert we were organising in Princeton University Chapel the following month to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Her reign. Nice!

Watched the debates on TV by the Presidential candidates - **Bush, Clinton** and **Perot**. Fascinating stuff! Perot certainly injected a breath of fresh air into the whole process. I didn't think Clinton would win!

I've always had a problem leaving food on my plate which I don't really want. ("John! I cooked it specially for you!") All this was changed when I enjoyed a generous lunch with a potential choir parent in Squibb's executive dining room (very swish). My host, sensing my problem, said, "Why should a chef, whom you don't know, determine how much you should eat?" Gone for ever are guilt feelings about leaving uneaten food - I think!

Kevin Mayhew, adventurous English publisher, had asked me to write an organ piece for him. I awoke at 6.00 am one day, began composing at 6.30, finished it, put it on my computer (Mac-Music Prose), checked it on the organ at Trinity and FAXED it to him by 1.30 p.m. He did publish it. Wow!

The same evening, my **Princeton Singers** with six new members, gave their first concert of the season at a concert-center in Pennsylvania. Afterwards, one of the organisers said, "That's the best concert we've ever had!" Wow, again!

The following day I completed the insert for a CD that Trinity Choirs are producing: 17 of the best performances we have given during the last 4 years, live, in concerts and services at Trinity, the University Chapel and Washington National Cathedral. It's good, thanks, again, to John Baker and his team.

Two days later I received a contract from Kevin Mayhew for a choral work he had accepted, "*Creator, Lord of Wonder*." Nice! I also received a call from the chairman of the Yost celebration; he'd received my Jubilate and intended to double my commission. Very nice!

Many friends comment on the content of these Newsletters: several made appreciative noises about answers to prayer I had received - especially instantaneous ones. This particular morning I felt far from God, and told

Him so: "Lord, you see how far I am from you." (I wrote down that prayer before reading my Bible.) Then I opened it at the set passage - psalm 10 - and read, in the very first verse, 'Lord, why do you stand so far off?' Snap!

That night, in bed, it suddenly occurred to me how good it would be if we could get the audience at our Coronation concert to join in the 'Vivats' for Parry's "*I was glad*." Mentioned it the next day to **Robert Palmer**, associate choirmaster at Trinity, who thought it a good idea. It was - read on!

The following day the incoming-president of the Princeton Singers, alto **Diane Walker**, came for lunch to work out dates for the Singers' August 1994 English Cathedrals' Tour. It was shaping up very nicely. Ree donna gain.

The Crystal Cathedral, Los Angeles, televises an hour's service worldwide every Sunday. **Robert Schuller** is the charismatic minister and **Fred Swann** the brilliant director of music (with the largest stop-knob organ console in the world - in fact he's got two of them - aye me!) Almost every week Dr. Schuller gives the world a memorable thought. Today's came from a word of knowledge given to a woman who had been miraculously healed: "*Those who are objects of God's mercy should be instruments of His praise!*" That, I think deserves another Wow!

That evening my Princeton Singers gave a concert in Diane Walker's church - we received a standing ovation, even though, according to my diary, we were two sopranos and half an alto short. (The 2 sops were ill, but I can't remember how we ended up with half an alto - my diary doesn't vouchsafe this info!)

The next day I received a delightful letter from **David Lowry**, ebullient director of music of a college in South Carolina, accepting an organ piece I'd composed for him, called "*David's Deci-Purcell!*" (so called because Purcell's Trumpet Tune suddenly appears, v. loudly). He said that he laughed for an hour after receiving it and would play it at a recital he was giving the following week at Harvard! I sent it to Kevin Mayhew for publication. He's still thinking about it!

At five minutes before 3.00 one afternoon I suddenly remembered that I was supposed to be at church to play for a funeral. I called the office, only to find that the Lord had led Nancianne Parrella there - she had been practising the organ - and so she played for the service. Hallelujah! When I confessed my sin of omission to the Rector, **Leslie Smith**, he said, "A similar thing happened to me yesterday!" My burden was lifted. *Laus Deo!*

Led a day's workshop at Westminster Choir College on how I teach children to read music. (That's the subject of book #1). I had some enthusiastic choirmasters there from five States, including Texas! American choirmasters mean business - Texas is about as far from Princeton as Moscow is from London!

1 Sun. It was exactly 10 years to the day that I first attended a service at Trinity (when I came here for a week to meet folk and buy my house). We had the same lesson - "*men [who] found out musical tunes...*" and the same final hymn which had meant so much to me in 1982: "*Let all my days, till life shall end, whate'er He send, be filled with praise!*" Hallelujah!

3 Tu. Read, in my Bible (1 Sam. 12) "*We want a king to rule over us... here is the king you have chosen...*" Bill Clinton was elected President of the United States! with 46% of the vote. Bush = 38%, Perot = 19%. Wow!

The Archbishop of Canterbury, **George Carey**, was making his first official visit to the US and created a great impression. He was quoted, in one newspaper, as saying, "There is no way of belonging to Christ except by belonging gladly and irrevocably to that glorious ragbag of saints and fatheads who make up the one holy, catholic and apostolic church."

He also told a group of young people who had gathered to meet him at Washington National Cathedral, "Jesus has a special place in his heart for young people. Enjoy your Christianity - and never let a grown-up tell you that you are the church of the future; you are the church of today!" Hooray!

Took my Trinity choir of Men, Boys and Girls to York, Pennsylvania, for the weekend to sing services in a couple of churches. Sang the first complete American performance of my *South African Communion Service* - later published by the RSCM, and after we sang our anthems at Evensong, the congregation gave us a standing ovation. (At Evensong?!)

The next day I received a letter from American composer, **Gerald Near**, who 'is' Aureole Publications, accepting my 'Yost' *Jubilate*. O be joyful!

Two days later the C of E voted to ordain women priests. One of the choirmen in our Adult choir, **Jim Thornton**, told me that he'd watched the process on TV and was amazed at the British silent reserve that greeted this news in the synod when the Abp. announced the voting figures. "But outside," he added, "where so many folk were awaiting this news, all hell broke loose!"

Two days later the British Ambassador to Washington and his Lady faxed their greetings for our Coronation concert on the morrow.

The University chapel, comparable to King's, Cambridge, was packed. Generous patrons had paid \$50 for their seats, which more than helped us cover our considerable costs. We'd hired the superb orchestra of Rutgers University for the occasion. Trinity's three choirs and the choir of our daughter church, All Saints', sang marvellously. The concert was held not only to honor HMQ but also to raise money for Habitat for Humanity, which benefitted by some \$7,000. I warmed up the audience for the "*Vivats*" and the whole experience was carried on wings of joy. It ending with yet another standing ovation after the combined choirs had re-

cessed to the strains of Walton's "Crown Imperial". The evening was recorded by the ubiquitous John Baker, and many of us treasure the superb tapes he produced for us. *Vivat Regina!*

20 Fri Live TV pictures from England of the awful fire at Windsor Castle.

The following week began pretty spectacularly: the proofs of my *South African service* arrived from the RSCM in England; received a supa letter from Hedley Yost thanking me for his *Jubilate*; proof of another organ piece arrived from Kevin Mayhew, followed by a letter asking for four more. The 1,100 CDs of the *Best of Trinity's Choirs* arrived!

25 Wed TV shots of The Queen giving her '*annus horribilis*' speech. There is a lot of sympathy for her over here.

28 Sat **Isaac Stern**, world famous violinist, was interviewed on TV. He said, concerning his teacher, "He taught me how to teach myself!" And regarding audiences: "One does not play to an audience, but one brings the audience to you, to enjoy what you are doing. The greatest thing in music is to make it sound simple - inevitable - as though there were no other way to do it."

Complimentary copies of "*Jesus Christ arose from death on Easter day*" (I like short titles!) arrived from Flammer. I'd composed it for Fred Swann and his choir of the Crystal Cathedral. They promised to sing it on worldwide TV on Easter Day. Appropriate!

DECEMBER

4 Fri Another letter from Kevin Mayhew asking for four more organ pieces! That evening two choir parents told me how their children's lives had been transformed since they joined Trinity's choirs. That sort of thing gives rosy glows which last!

The following day the Princeton Singers' Board, chaired by the redoubtable and wonderful **Ann McGoldrick**, began tackling the task of raising \$25,000 to enable the Singers to undertake their August 1994 English Cathedrals' Tour, to augment the \$25,000 which we expect to have in our kitty by then. They are a great group, made up of some of the most scintillating business and artistic people of Princeton. One is never bored at Board meetings!

9 Wed John Major announced of the separation of Charles and Di.

13 Sun Cousin **Sheila's** 70th birthday. The Family had rallied round to give her a special present - spoke to her on the phone across The Pond - she was delighted!

18 Fri Went to a party at The Institute for Advanced Study (where **Einstein** was), given by a Trinity parishioner, **Dorothy Thomas**. Sat next to two other Trinitarians, **Gavin & Kit Hildick Smith**, who told me that Gavin went to College, in England, with **Christopher Robin Milne**! Kit also told me that she was once at a small party given by Lord

Hailsham, former Lord Chancellor of England, where the guests told jokes to each other in Latin! They don't make them like that any more - or do they?

19 Sat Learned that **Gerre Hancock**, director of music of St. Thomas' Church, 5th Ave., NYC, was again including my arrangement of "Lord of the Dance" for his Christmas carol service. (It's published by Hinshaw under the title, "Jesus Christ is Lord"). Gerre has the finest Episcopal choir in the US - we all look up to him as a model as to How it Should Be Done.

It is always a joy to receive Christmas cards from friends and relations all over the world. Thank you! Many contain supa, or sad, messages.

"Chris has now graduated with a B.A. hons. in French and German, but cannot get a job despite 63 applications."

(From Paris) "We lunched with Dupré's grand-daughter. When we asked her how old she was she said, 'Half past eleven!'"

"Last Sunday we had all 4 children baptized as RCs. We did them all at once. No chance of getting me baptized!"

"This year I have 1,016 pupils. Do you think the new Dean will be a Christian?"

(Stephen Cleobury) "The BBC's new documentary on King's choir should perhaps be entitled, 'What the BBC think a year in the life of King's choir is like!'"

It was very good to hear, this Christmas, from two friends in England, one of whom has been made an O.B.E., and the other (an Oxford contemporary) who has been given the Order of the Bath! I am delighted that almost all my musical contemporaries in England have now been given honorary doctorates; my predecessor at Trinity, **Jim Litton**, has also been given one. Should someone offer an hon. doctorate to me, I wouldn't refuse. (Heavy hint to Those in Powerful Places!) That would be a gift to treasure when I leave these shores!

I spend every Christmas Eve morning in the home of dearest friends **John Sully & Kathy Rohrer**, when we listen to the King's carol service live (at 10.00 am our time!) We dissected the accents of the various lesson readers, and agreed that the best, this year, was Stephen Cleobury on account of the natural pristine clarity of his enunciation.

That paved the way for Trinity's marathon Christmas Eve services, which begin at 5.00 pm! The midnight service was, as usual, packed - folk were almost climbing the walls to get in. Our massive choir, augmented by alumni who were home from colleges, had 17 basses!

28 Mon Began writing out, on my computer, my book on how I teach kids to read music. I'd been working on the MS for three years, and now it was about to be published.

1993 JANUARY

3 Sun. Put today's services together, including an ambitious Evensong, in one rehearsal each - it was just like my book coming to life - these singers can read anything - it's terrific! At the reception after Evensong it was announced that our wonderful music secretary, **Robbie Griffith**, had just got engaged to **Shawn Ellsworth** (owner of a well-known liquor store in Princeton.) Great rejoicings all round.

Robbie showed a due sense of values for, after the Reception, instead of spending the evening with her fiancée, she attended a party at The Sully/Rohrer, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of my arrival at Princeton. That was a wholly glorious evening - so many close and generous friends were there - presents and speeches flowed as fast as the food and wine, and the six leaders of the parish who appointed me ten years ago, who have since become closest friends, were there to speed the evening along with joy. The party ended with my friends singing a new version of "Oh, no John!" entitled "Oh, yes John!" That was a very precious time. Thank you!



John Sully, Don Edwards, Joan Fleming, JB,

Kathy Rohrer, Wyman Rolph & Gene Haring

10 Sun Conducted a come-and-sing performance of Schubert and Mozart Masses at the local Unitarian Church. 100 in choir, plus orchestra and four soloists. Afterwards someone said to me, "You're as refreshing as an inside shower!" and another said, regarding my Cambridge scarf, "Did you know that it's the same colors as the Liberian flag?" No, I didn't!

The next day I received a long FAX from **Richard Cock**, senior music producer for the South African Broadcasting Corporation, about my up-coming tour of South Africa. Mutual friend **Jenny Campbell Pitt**, with whom I stayed three years previously, will co-ordinate the tour. This will be my fourth visit to that beautiful country, and plans were underway to make it exhaustive as well as exhausting!

The next two weekends were wholly amazing!

On Friday, 15th I flew to Los Angeles to lead a one-day workshop for choirmasters in Pasadena Presbyterian church on new music for the church. The day was sponsored by **Augsburg** (which publishes much of my music, and also was about to publish my book on sight-singing) and my schedule was somewhat killing:

5.30 pm flew from Newark

9.15 pm arr. L.A. (local time = 12.15 am East coast time)

2 hours later I arrived at my Pasadena hotel. Bed!

Next day - up at 6.30 am.

8.30 am Collected by **Tim Strand** of **Augsburg** and led the workshop which was attended by **200** choirmasters. Americans do things in a big way! That was followed by dinner with the Augsburg hierarchy, which was hilarious. Bed at 10.00 pm.

Next day up at 4.45 am to catch 8.00 am plane back to Newark. Home at 6.0 pm. Relaxed!

The following weekend I helped to direct another new-music workshop for choirmasters. This time it was in Pennsylvania, only a 4-hour drive away, and was sponsored by **Flammer** who also publish a lot of my music. However, instead of having 200 choirmasters to conduct, the church was packed with 600! What a thrill it was to direct this quasi choral society in a whole lot of music, some of it, my own, which had recently been published. And if that weren't enough, that church happens

to house the seventh largest church organ in the world, which made a tremendous noise! We were also videod for local TV!

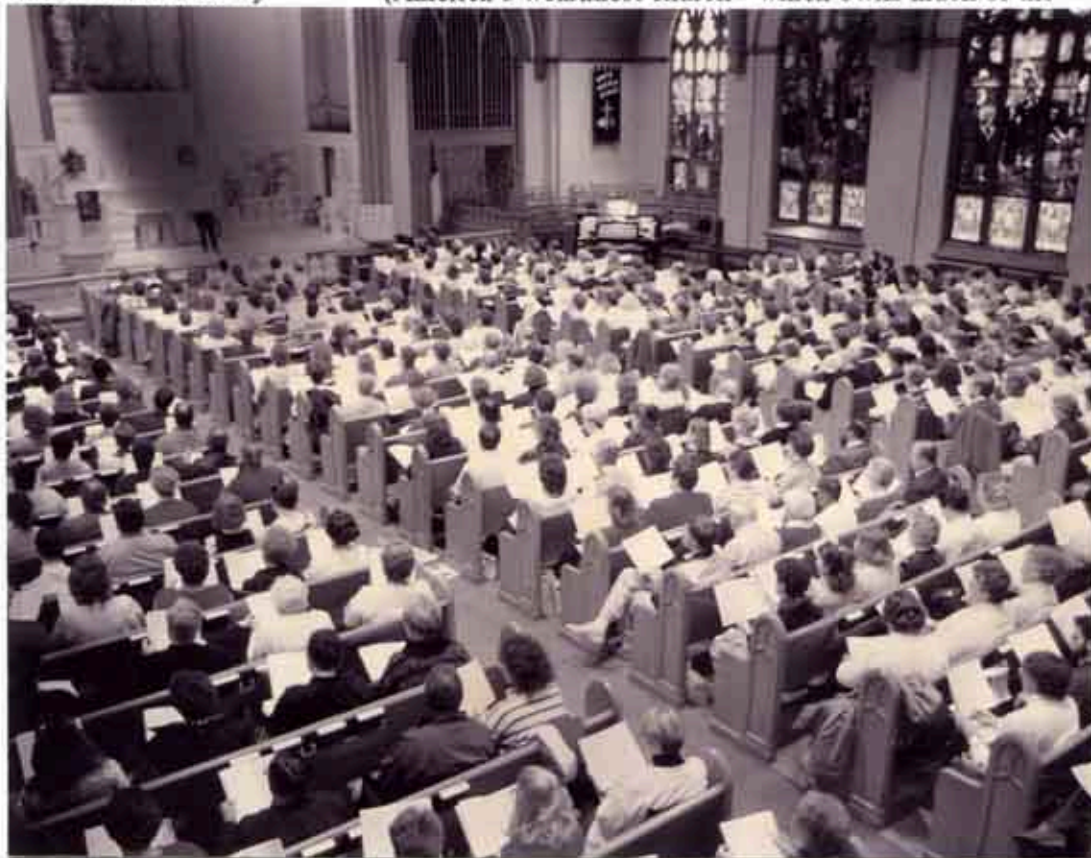
I wrote an article on this experience which was published in *Musical Opinion* - one of Britain's leading music magazines. M.O. publishes a pretty regular series of my *Letters from America* - may they give delight to my many musical friends Ningland.

In between these two events I received, out of the blue, a 'phone call from **Nico Bester** in Australia, asking if I'd like to come out there to direct some choir courses. Would I! I'd first met Nico in South Africa when he was organist of Kimberley Cathedral, where I directed a week's course for his choir. He and **Andrea** have since become great friends.

I also received an invitation from **Jim Litton**, director of the famous American Boychoir, for 10 of my Trinity choirboys to join with his choir to sing part of the St. Matthew Passion in Lincoln Center, NYC, with **Kurt Masur** and the New York Philharmonic. Yes! Life is not dull in Princeton!

The following Sunday my Princeton Singers gave a concert at St. Paul's Chapel, New York; a quasi Wren-type church with Georgian furniture and fittings, and glorious acoustics. It has the pew in which George Washington sat after he'd been sworn in as first US President.

The concert was sponsored by **Dr. Owen Burdick**, director of music of Trinity Church, Wall Street (America's wealthiest church - which owns much of the



600 choirmasters with JB in Pennsylvania!

Wall Street area). Afterwards he wrote me a letter in which he said that the Princeton Singers are "simply the finest group of singers in the country... out performing the Tallis Scholars." After thanking him for these rash words I told him that, of course, he didn't include his own fine choir in this assessment, or that of Gerre Hancock, which is incomparable. Still, it's nice to have it in writing!

My Singers gave yet another concert the following week - in a vast RC Oratory in Philadelphia. It had so much reverberation that we had to sing everything slower! Channel 10 TV news folk were there with their video cameras, and we appeared on the 6.30 pm news - although we didn't see it as we were too busy partying afterwards in the home of one of our Philly singers!

FEBRUARY

1 Mon Robbie Griffith (soon to be Ellsworth) sent off the final version of my sight-singing book to Augsburg. What a relief!

2 Tu Delightful letter from **Andrew Seivewright**, former organist of Carlisle Cathedral. He is thoroughly enjoying retirement and claims to have the loveliest view in the North of England from his home in Cumberland. Come and see him and his wife when I return to Mellor (only 90 minutes away). Yes!

4 Th An exciting letter from **Ed. Worster**, senior producer for South African TV in Johannesburg. He wants to do some TV programmes during my up-coming visit. Yes!

By the same post came a gracious letter from **Stanley Vann**, former organist of Peterborough Cathedral, who is also enjoying retirement. He recommended it highly, and now has over 100 of his compositions published. I've got some way to go before catching up with him!

The following Friday I flew to Toronto to lead a workshop on sight-singing with the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus, director: **John Tuttle**. That was a good time, not only because of the response of the kids and the choirmasters who came to watch, but also because I stayed the night with a former Trinity choir family, **Peter, Margo and Bruce Chambers**. They'd spent a year with us in Princeton - Margo had sung with our Adult choir and Bruce with the boys. It was supa to be with them all again - not least because their beautiful home is spotless! I thought of my own home which had stains on the carpets which wouldn't come out and felt that *Something Should Be Done!*

The following week I flew to Denver, Colorado, to lead workshops for **Donald Pearson**, the cathedral's lively and talented director of music. Three particular joys added to the delight of the visit - I stayed with composer **Gerald Near** who, with **Michael Case**, lives in a lovely house some 20 miles outside Denver with seeming acres of splendid carpet throughout their multi-storied home. This gave me a further boost to do some-

thing about my own carpets. The view from my bedroom window was spectacular - 100 miles of snow-covered Rockies. Oh, to be able to put it in a box and take it home with me - together with my generous and gracious hosts! Gerald and Michael took me to visit the famous



Air Force Academy Chapel during a glorious day out in the Rockies. Its roof was built in the shape of aircraft wings. We also saw the 2,000 cadets lining up with incredible smartness to march into lunch. T'was a mouth-watering sight!

The second delight was to work again with **Eric Plutz**, the cathedral's most gifted assistant organist, who had been my assistant at Trinity during his senior year at Westminster Choir College. Eric is one of the finest recitalists I know. American readers, be sure to book him for your next recital series!

And the third delight was, of course, to work with Don's splendid cathedral choirs, which I've conducted several times before, watched by a large number of local choirmasters. They were generous enough to sing several of my own compositions during the workshop - notably my arrangement of "Amazing Grace" which Don was later to record.

6 On my return I received a call from **Robert Poovey** in Seattle asking me to lead a similar workshop for him

next year! He also booked himself to come and stay with me in September to watch a week's rehearsals of Trinity's choirs. Robert is also a brilliant organist - I shall never forget his performance of a Vierne 'Finale' on the 4-manual Flentrop tracker in Duke University Chapel a few years ago. That man can play!

26 Fri An eventful day:

Finished proofing my setting of the *St. Mark Passion* for choir and congregation, which is being published by Augsburg.

The World Trade Center was bombed, stunning the whole of the US, for many Americans had thought that 'it can't happen here!'. It did.

Dinner with choir parents **Ted & Benita Ryan** who live in a gorgeous house in Pennsylvania, built in 1684 and added to over the centuries. It goes up steps and around corners in the most delicious ways. The Ryans give spectacular dinner parties and their guest list is brilliant. Tonight included a couple whose home was featured in a recent edition of *American Homes and Gardens*. I took one look at the glossy photographs of their beautiful house, filled with flowers, antique furniture, space, light and carpets, and decided that the time had really come to re-carpet my entire house!

The following day **Carol Carver**, from Augsburg, called to say that my sight-singing book would be ready by June, in time for the national conference of the Association of Anglican Musicians, (AAM), which would be held in Princeton. (I was on the committee organising this - no time or space for more details!) But Carol also said that they wanted to make a video of the book and would be sending down a camera crew in a few weeks! Wow!

MARCH

1 Mon Another most exciting day!

Another call from Carol Carver at Augsburg saying that they want me to edit a series of music for children's choirs as a companion to my sight-singing book. Yes!

A letter came from Flammer - in one year they'd sold 8,000 copies of my arrangement of "*In the bleak midwinter*" as well as 3,000 of "*Jesus Christ arose from death*". Nice!

The following day **Clifford Hill**, chairman of the Princeton AAM conference organising committee, told me that he'd decided that the conference would sing my setting of "*A prayer for Church musicians*" at the closing service in the University Chapel in June. Thank you!

On my day off I went to Sears to order carpets for my house. They were very helpful. My spirits rose but my bank balance fell.

Yet another call from Carol Carver at Augsburg. They want a follow-up book to my sight-singing book, to be ready for next year. Golly! Began to make a start on it - to include everything that I know on choirstraining! I tended to wake at 5.00 am during ensuing weeks and months to write a chapter before breakfast, in addition to

sending a fairly steady stream of music to Augsburg for children's choirs. My hair is getting greyer!

13 Sat Annual Rummage day at Trinity - but the heavens opened and we were deluged by a 10" snow storm. All airports from Boston to Atlanta were closed and it was even freezing in Florida.

I barely made it home; my car got stuck halfway in the road outside my house and there it stayed for several days. Church was cancelled the next day - but despite all this we'd made \$28,000 at the sale!

(*We're experiencing even worse snow storms right now. Nancianne Parrella said that they're the worst in 35 years - school has been cancelled for nearly two weeks, and so have many choir practices. I'm snowed up with a foot of snow outside and waiting for two healthy young men, who've started a snow shovelling business, to rescue me!*)

18 Mon **Buffy Gray**, founder member of the Princeton Singers, gave birth to young **John** - 3 1/2 lbs! They and father **Nick** doing well. The following week, another Princeton Singers' soprano gave birth - to a daughter. We were all thrilled at two such happy deliveries.

25 Th Began to get the house ready for The Men who were coming to fit the new carpets next week. That meant taking down nearly 200 photographs which cover my walls - taking the opportunity to repaint the walls - and moving all books out of bookcases, so that all the furniture could be moved easily. It was a major operation!

Carol Carver called me (again!) She wanted to change the wording of some of my book from English into American. e.g. The verb 'to practise' is spelled *practice*. Choir master should be changed to choir *director*, and semi-tone to *half-step*!

28 Sun Read **Paul Hale's** generous crit. of my setting of the *St. Matthew Passion* for congregation and choir in the [English] Organist's Review. Wrote to thank him! I've known Paul since his student days - he is now the distinguished organist of Southwell Minster [Cathedral] in the North of England, and given to coming over here to direct the occasional choir course. May our paths cross again soon.

APRIL

2 Fri The Men arrived at 9.0 am to strip the old carpets and fit new ones. They were superb - tidy, efficient, good company and artistic. They finished at 4.30 pm, leaving a mountain of old carpet outside. I have a new house! **[Photo over]**

4 Sun Palm Sunday. My choir of men, boys and girls sang my setting of the *St. Matthew Passion* very well at the 11.15 service. They returned in the afternoon to sing Stainer's *Crucifixion*. A good day!

10 Sat At the Princeton Singers Board meeting, when discussing fund raising and which influential people might help us, one of the glorious members said, "There must be half a dozen of us round this table who could call **Hilary Clinton!**" I like Princeton!

I welcomed a guest for the night - **John Bednall**, headmaster of one of the finest boys' schools in Australia. He wants me to be 'artist-in-residence' for several weeks in August 1995, and then to compose a work for the school's 150th anniversary the following year, and come back to conduct it! Can life get any more exciting?

The next morning, Easter Day, I watched Fred Swann's marvelous (American spelling) choir sing the world-wide TV premiere of my "*Jesus Christ arose from death*" from the Crystal Cathedral. They were superb. Fred wrote to me that they had recorded it the previous Easter Day; his adult choir sang it first at the 5.30 am. service (!) and repeated it at subsequent services - five in all! After that they were a little hoarse. Wouldn't you be!

(Below) JB & Nanci with George Shearing



(Above) Ex-rated carpets outside my house



Seven of my Trinity boys were invited to sing the spirits' parts in the New Jersey opera production of *The Magic Flute*. This involved us all in many rehearsals, not only at church, but also, of course, with the other singers. It proved to be a gruelling schedule for everyone but, in the end, it was well worth-while. The boys were supposed to appear from cloud machines. New Jersey, as you may know, is notoriously short of these, and so they had to sing their parts whilst being carried on the shoulders of dancers. That was a new experience for them all!

23 Fri Spent the most marvellous (English spelling) day in New York City with Nancianne Parrella. We were going to meet jazz pianist **George Shearing** and his lovely wife, **Ellie**. Nancianne knew the Shearings well, for they were members of the congregation of the NYC church where Nancianne was organist, until she came to Princeton. Just before we reached the Shearings' most gracious apartment, I asked Nancianne how long she thought we should stay. "About 20 minutes!"

We stayed for four hours - four glorious hours, whilst George played to us on his three pianos, let us listen to some of his amazing recordings from his enormous CD library, and Ellie gave us afternoon tea. That time was as good as a vacation and we returned to Princeton dancing on air. Hallelujah!

29 Th The Film Crew from Augsburg arrived to make a movie of my sight-singing book (which now rejoiced under the title "*FIVE WHEELS to successful sight-*

singing"! The book is written as a set of conversations between a music director (me) and an organ scholar who wants to learn how to teach children to read music. At that time we didn't have an organ scholar, for Nancianne was filling every possible organist's role for us. And so Augsburg hired an drama student from nearby Rider College, **Jimmy Mount**, to play the part. He was superb. Not only could he remember his lines after reading them through a couple of times - a feat which defeated me even though I had written them! - but he also responded to everything in a manner similar to that which our succession of brilliant organ scholars have. In fact, after attending our full rehearsal, before we started shooting, he said, "Wow - it all came true!"

Filming took much longer than any of us thought. The two boys and two girls whom I'd chosen to act the part of 'new children' had two days off school - the whole process took 6 days. But the end result was magnificent. Thank you, Augsburg!



Filming my "FIVE WHEELS" book on sight-singing in our supra practice room at Trinity Church.

L-R: **JB, Hannah Murnen, Clare Sully** (daughter of **John & Kathy Rohrer** - see p.4), **Jimmy Mount** (standing behind), **Tim Callahan** (who has two brothers in the choir), **William Hagaman** (with one choir brother) and Augsburg crew: **Paul Auguston** with his \$60,000.00 (!) camera, and producer **Tom Gerard**.

MAY...

... was filled with amending endless proofs of my sight-singing book. Authors will know what I mean!

27 Th Letter from Flammer: they'd sold a total of 123,000 copies of my compositions since they started to publish my works. Wow indeed!

JUNE

2 Wed Trinity staff 24-hour away time. We all took the **Myers-Briggs** personality tests which we found fascinating. The leaders we had hired revealed to each of us just who we are and how we could relate to others more constructively. I turned out to be extrovert - organiser-judgemental and charismatic! I was also told that these

qualities were shared by Jesus and Hitler! Am not quite sure where that leaves me!

Several good things came out of this: for example, extroverts don't wholly trust introverts, because we can't tell what they are thinking. The introverts on our staff noted this, kindly. On the other hand we extroverts were told that we sometimes have to look in our driving mirror to discover whom we've just run over. That's very true!

One practical result of that day was that we determined to begin every staff meeting with saying appreciative things about each other for 5 minutes; such as how good last Sunday's sermon was and how we valued the cleaning job the sexton had done. This oils the wheels of communication wonderfully! I commend it to my colleagues.

5 Sat Letter from cousin **Dick** in England: he's having an eye implant today. I called him - he had had it and was all bandaged up. He'd know tomorrow how it was. Called him the next day. It was a success - he can see better now than he has for years. Hallelujah!

11 Fri Led a 2-day workshop in Bedford, NY, for **Gregg Redner's** children's choir. They are the loveliest, friendliest and most co-operative children I have ever met. To be with them all for those two days was a continual delight. Why are they like that? Because Gregg, and his wife **Linda**, are such loving people - and it shows!

14 Mon The AAM Conference week at Princeton. These five days were the culmination of three years' planning and we were all keyed up, because expectations of the delegates, who came from all over the US, were very high. I'd been receiving a steady stream of letters during the past years from AAM members saying, 'Looking forward to being with you in Princeton - and to hearing your Princeton Singers again!'

There's no way I can even begin to describe the glorious happenings of that week - our day out in Philadelphia, concerts by Westminster Choir College staff and the American Boychoir, and also the concert my Singers gave in the University Chapel. We were accompanied, for Britten's "Rejoice in the Lamb" by superb organist, **Tom Goeman**, who will be playing for us in England. It was a particular joy to conduct that performance, for Britten had written that work exactly 50 years before to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, where **Alec Wyton**, **Michael Nicholas**, **Stephen Cleobury**, **Andrew Shenton** and I had begun our careers. The Singers sang superbly and we received a standing ovation. One delegate said, afterwards, "Your singing was like crystal - there were so many colors." Another said, "That was the finest choral singing I've ever heard - it was the high point of the conference for me!"

The star of the conference was **Alan Jones**, dean of Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, who turned out to be an Englishman. He gave us five homilies, each one of which gripped our souls for eternity, for he loved us all, and it showed. What a man, who could reveal such a Savior!

Gerald Near was also there as distinguished speaker, and it was a delight to welcome him to my home for an evening. My FIVE WHEELS book and video appeared just in time, and were quickly sold out, and I also met **Hedley Yost** for the first time - 'our' Jubilate was published by Gerald's Aureole publishing house that week - so it all came together. We were pleased!

The following Sunday Trinity staged a book-signing ceremony at the parish picnic. Two of us had just published books and we discovered, to our joy, that sales to choir and church folk were high!



Book-signing surrounded by choirfolk.
John Baker (USNR), is standing behind JB

22 Tu. Attended my first All American Baseball game, as guest of tenor, **Bob Berglund**. Bob sings in both Trinity adult choirs as well as my Princeton Singers. He does things in a big way - he took along 39 other guests as well - to the Veterans' Stadium in Philadelphia where we joined 41,000 other fans for a superb game by the Phillies and the Atlanta Braves. By the end of it, after three hours, I understood the rules for the first time. On the other hand, another of his guests, **Scott McGoldrick**, former Princeton Singer and son of Ann (mentioned above), told me he didn't understand cricket even though he'd seen it played in New Zealand. It took me only three minutes to explain it to him; he's very intelligent! Final score: Phillies 5 - Braves 2!

23 Th. Flammer accepted my anthem, "Proclaiming Pentecost" which I'd composed for **Fred Swann** and his choir at the Crystal Cathedral. I hoped that they would sing it next Pentecost - they didn't - they sang it in November!

27 Sun Drove to Wilmington, Delaware, to be guest speaker at the AGO Convention. Spoke on my favorite subjects - how simple it is to teach sight-singing, and T.I.P.S. (Ten Immediately Practical Secrets which will transform your choir). They were very well received!

JULY

10 Sat Wedding of **Shawn and Robbie Ellsworth** at Trinity Church. A lovely wedding, where Robbie's son, **John**, was not only best man but also played the organ as part of the Prelude. He's head boy of my choir. Lots of Rosy Glows all round! (Photo p.11)

11 Sun Flew to SOUTH AFRICA via ENGLAND for six of the most amazing weeks of my life! I stayed in Reigate for a few days with cousins **Dick & Sheila**, getting over jet lag - Dick's plastic eye is splendid, and Sheila's birthday present of a glorious necklace gave us much delight.

15 Th Flew from Heathrow, arriving the next day in Johannesburg, 10 seconds early (well done, British Airways!), where I was met by **Susan Cock**, talented wife of **Richard**, my official host. (See Jan 11th). Again, there's no way I can even begin to recount the glories of those weeks in SA. And so, please, my generous hosts, forgive me if your name is not even mentioned here - you will all have received the voluminous report I sent to you when I returned, and so you know how greatly I treasure your friendship as well as your energetic musical expertise. I'll just pick a few of the many highlights:

1 Giving lectures at three Universities on Bach number symbolism and English 20th century choral music (Elgar to Britten.)

The day after I'd lectured in Johannesburg at the University of Witwatersrand, the students rioted. I don't think it was my fault. The day after I'd lectured at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, the university cleaning staff went on strike! But I think I left the University of



Port Elizabeth in one piece - my lecture there was attended by the entire music faculty - staff and students. Wow!

2 I spent three idyllic days working the fabulous international touring choir of the South African Boychoir (Directors, **Bunny Ashley-Botha** and **Botes**

The Drakensberg touring choir (who were fresh from their successful tour of the USA), after one of JB's concerts with them in their recital hall.

Centre: **Bunny Ashley-Botha**, **JB** and **Botes Gresse**



Gresse) after which I conducted them in two concerts of my music.

Jim Litton has generously called this choir 'the finest boychoir in the world'. I would not disagree with him.

My three days' visit were videod my staff-member **Vaughan van Zyl**, who edited 14 hours of tape into an

hour's programme which is now on sale whenever the boys give a concert. The copy he gave me is one of my greatest treasures.

3 My chief hostess, **Jenny Campbell-Pitt**, of Johannesburg, had me stay in her delightful home for fully half my visit, and also drove me around a large part of that beautiful country for a week. We went down a gold mine together and survived the experience! Her school choir sang one of my compositions, most beautifully, for a TV programme which we made for nationwide release, and she co-ordinated every other engagement I undertook. And I undertook a lot!

From workshops for teachers, teaching them how I teach, to workshops for adult singers and choirmasters, for choir children, for school children of all ages and for massed choirs. It was a most exhausting time and there were occasions when I wondered if I'd make it to the next day. I did, but it was a close-run thing!

4 Senior TV producer for the SABC, **Ed Worster**, spent four days following me round with his camera team as I conducted, played the organ, composed music and lectured, to create a programme about my visit (in addition to the first programme he'd made with Jenny's choir) which would be relayed nationwide in January. To have a TV camera focussed on you for hours on end was a

unique experience. I enjoyed it, thanks to Ed's gracious encouragement.

We finished the tour with a spectacular lunch at The Johannesburg Country Club, where Ed presented me with some ties that one of his colleagues at the SABC had



made. **Jenny, Ed, Susan Cock and I** went somewhat berserk when Ed brought out his colourful gifts in the gardens of the Country Club, which were overlooked by the SABC headquarters. But we managed to calm ourselves down by the time we went inside for a delicious lunch 'midst luxurious surroundings. Echos of the Empire are still very strong there, despite current strong moves towards a New South Africa.

And then I returned to England, to recover with cousins **Dick and Sheila**, and to spend a delightful night with cousins **Joan and Lewellyn** in London en route to help celebrate the centenary of **St. Matthew's Church, Northampton**, where I was organist for 6 happy years at the start of my career. I gave a nostalgic talk to a large audience in the parish hall, half of whom I recognised instantly, even though I had left them 29 years earlier.

I also played part of the recording of Britten's "*Rejoice in the Lamb*" by the Princeton Singers at their superb Princeton University Chapel concert two months earlier. It was almost exactly 50 years to the day that this work received its first performance to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St. Matthew's - and how wonderful it was to have several friends there that evening who either sang or heard that world premiere! I was so honoured to be there and thrilled that so many friends remembered me

- thank you, my dearest hosts, for arranging that very special time!

SEPTEMBER

And so back to Princeton for the start of another season which promises to be even busier than ever. The three church choirs are blossoming with fine singers, and my Princeton Singers are also better than ever, as we gear ourselves up for the excitements of our English Cathedrals' Tour this August. In addition I have been invited to lead a host of workshops, from Buffalo to Seattle, from Madison to Atlanta and beyond. Life is very full and exciting!

Two post scripts:

1. So many musicians in the US and abroad have asked from where they can order copies of my music. Contact **Clifford Hill**, at the Princeton University Store, PRINCETON NJ 08540 USA. (Phone 609-921-8500). He can get all music for you very quickly!

2. Many friends in England are planning to hear my **Princeton Singers** when they come over in August. Some are even booking coaches for the Hereford Three Choirs' Festival! It will be wonderful to see you during these two weeks.

If I haven't seen you recently, please say, "*Hello, John! I'm Joe Bloggs from Lower Neadly!*" for my mind will be firmly focussed on the Singers - and seeing a familiar face out of context is liable to throw me! Thanx!

PRINCETON SINGERS August Tour, 1994:

15-20, Mon-Sat. 5.00 **St. Paul's Cathedral.**

21 Su 10, 11.15, 3.00 **Westminster Abbey.**

23 Tu 11.00 am **Concert: 3 Choirs Festival, Hereford Cathedral.**

Book seats now! Limited space.

{Three Choirs' Office, c/o Cathedral Close}

24 W 5.30 Evensong **Gloucester Cathedral.**

25 Th 7.30 **Concert: Tewkesbury Abbey.**

27 Sa 7.30 **Concert: Blackburn Cathedral.**

28 Su 11.0 am : **Liverpool RC Cathedral**

28 Su 4.30 Evensong:

Mellor Parish Church, Blackburn.

Please come to hear us!

John
John Bertalot

Trinity Church, 33 Mercer Street,
Princeton, NJ, 08540, USA

(Phone: 609-924-2277)

14th February, 1994