

Notes

International Adventist Musicians Association



The Oregon Adventist Men's and Corul Bărbătesc Adventist din Romania choruses perform in Bucharest, Romania, in 2009

The Oregon Adventist Men's Chorus

Since the 1960s, increasing number of independent Adventist music groups have been established, some lasting only briefly while others flourished. One of the larger and more enduring of these groups is the 100-member Oregon Adventist Men's Chorus formed seventeen years ago in the Northwest. Its success led to the formation of a related group in Romania and inspiring joint tours and concerts in both the United States and Romania.

The Oregon Adventist Men's Chorus started in 1994, when Lou Wildman, a retired physician with a musical background, responded to a request to organize a group of men to provide music for an

an Easter program in the East Salem Seventh-day Adventist Church. This one time event with twenty singers led to an ensemble that has grown under his leadership into a group with over one hundred men and an international

ministry. Following that first Easter performance, Wildman was approached about using his group to provide a finale for that summer's Oregon Conference camp meeting. Concerned that the

Continued on page 3

Oregon Adventist . . .

sound of this small ensemble of twenty would be lost in the large tent where the meeting was held, he invited other men to join his group to rehearse and then perform and was surprised when he ended up with a group of 112. Their singing led to an enthusiastic and heartwarming response at that final meeting of camp meeting.

The success of that venture led to a festival concert the following spring by this larger group and then to annual concerts in Portland, Salem, and Medford, Oregon, and in nearby Vancouver, Washington, as well as at subsequent summer camp meetings. In 1996, they officially became the OAMC, a group specializing in sacred music, including classical choral masterpieces, traditional and gospel hymns, and spirituals.

Because the members are scattered throughout Oregon and Washington in as many as 65 churches, preparation for a performance occurs in small groups and with individuals working on their own, assisted by recorded rehearsal tracks. The full group does not sing together until the final rehearsal before a concert.

Accompaniments for the group range from piano or organ to a full orchestra. Smaller ensembles also are formed for that purpose and often perform on their own during the concert.

Guest conductors also are featured. Anton Armstrong, noted choral conductor at St. Olaf College in Minnesota and conductor of the Oregon Bach Festival Youth Choral Academy, conducted in 2006. Kraig S. M. Scott, professor of music at WWU, accompanied on that occasion.

Wildman urges the members of OAMC to bring the text of life by becoming emotionally involved with

its message. He feels that the collective force of that many men singing the gospel message with heartfelt emotion provides a powerful witness to those who listen.

Four years after formally organizing, nearly one hundred of the members sang in the SkyDome in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, for over 50,000 attendees at the 2000 General Conference Session. Later that year, they sang with the famous Vienna Male Chorus Society when it performed at the International Choral Festival in Gladstone, Oregon. In the VMC's 150 years of existence, composers Schubert, Strauss, Brahms,



Alin Apostol and Lou Wildman

Bruckner and others have been inspired by its singing to create a lasting legacy in music for it and similar groups that have followed, including today's OAMC.

At the time of the Toronto performance, Wildman was invited by the president of the Romanian Conference to come to that country with his group. The response to that invitation would take nine years and be facilitated by a Romanian young man attending Walla Walla College, now University.

At about that time, Alin Apostol, a theology student, joined OAMC and sang all during his stay, even though it

meant a lengthy commute. He was thrilled by the experience and upon his return home in 2003 he attempted to interest others in forming such a group. Finally, realizing it was not going to happen unless he took the initiative, he organized the Corul Bărbătesc Adventist din Romania men's chorus, and in 2007 its fifty members presented a festival concert in Romania.

Even so, the potential for a larger membership was a challenge Apostol wanted to meet. He invited Wildman to bring OAMC to Romania to sing with his group, hoping that such a venture would ignite greater interest in his fellow Romanians and inspire them with a vision of what could be done. In 2009, following extensive planning and fundraising, Wildman arrived in Romania with 100 men, all of whom were excited by the opportunity to join with their Romanian counterpart, directed by friend and former OAMC member Apostol.

It was a memorable trip with eight concerts given jointly in prestigious venues in that country along with impromptu concerts along the way. The music, witnessing, and camaraderie that developed between the groups left members of the two choruses and those who heard them deeply moved by the experience. Another gratifying result of that tour was the increase in the Romanian chorus to 120 men by 2010.

The success of that tour led to sixty members of CBAR coming to the U.S. in June 2010 for a joint tour of the Northwest, plus performances at the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta and at Emory University.

For members of the Romanian group, it was a once in a lifetime experience to visit the U.S. But more importantly, it was a chance to reunite and share in a profound spiritual and musical experience, one that moved audiences wherever they performed.