

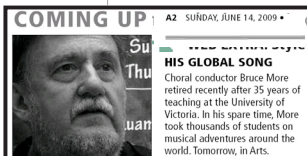
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LIFE

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COLONIST

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COMING UP

A2 SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2009

HIS GLOBAL SONG

Choral conductor Bruce More retired recently after 35 years of teaching at the University of Victoria. In his spare time, More took thousands of students on musical adventures around the world. Tomorrow, in Arts.

CHORAL MUSIC

Always More to give

Retiring conductor worked tirelessly to take students and song around the world

For more than 35 years, Bruce More taught conducting and music theory at the University of Victoria, but in his spare time he took thousands of students - members of UVic's Chamber Singers and the Prima Choir he founded - on musical adventures around the world.

When the choral conductor decided to retire recently, his swan song was one more trip, this time to South Korea, Thailand, Hong Kong and Cambodia, where his 45 students sang 15 concerts in 18 days.

"I got bitten by the travel bug in graduate school at Yale" he confessed. "So when I started teaching in 1970, I got the tour thing going, first off the Island, then to Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, Australia. Since 1987, I've taken the choirs to over 200 cities in 40 countries."

And the moss didn't grow under his feet at home, either.

After taking his doctorate in voice performance and conducting at Yale, where he conducted the first Yale University Women's Chorus as well as four other ensembles, the Ocean Falls native returned to B.C. and founded the Music Department at Malaspina College. He taught theory, history and private voice, conducted three ensembles and set up a summer choral programme for the Courtenay Youth Music Camp.

After joining UVic's faculty in 1973, he became founding president of the Vancouver Island Opera Society (now Pacific Opera Victoria), conducted the Victoria Choral Society and was president of the UVic Faculty Association. In 1994 he founded the 80-voice Prima Choir, a UVic



ensemble, and since 1973 has also conducted the 36-voice UVic Chamber Singers, whose members sing as part of their degree requirements.

In 2006, he took time out to accept the Herbert Drost award for his lifetime service to choral music in B.C.

The recent trip to southeast Asia was his third with students - the first to Cambodia - and organized on a shoestring with "immense help from two former students who went back to Korea to teach ESL, and married local women."

Fund-raising concerts and grants from the university meant each student paid only \$1800 for 21 days, including travel, room and board, and at the end there was a little left over and each student gave \$50 to a women's centre in Cambodia, said More.

"Any singer will tell you, travelling to exotic places and performing for large appreciative audiences is very special and memorable, but

saw rural parts that were absolute eye candy, gorgeous," More said.

Sometimes students sang alone, sometimes with locals, and mostly they performed classical music.

"We didn't really know what to expect, but everywhere we were greeted like royalty, with standing ovations. Sometimes people went nuts, yelling and screaming. Music really is the universal language."

UVic associate professor Christopher Butterfield said Bruce More has left "very, very, big boots to fill."

"I'm not quite sure people really understand what he has accomplished over 35 years. He has done more for the University of Victoria globally than any other person. You hear about choirs making little tours of English cathedrals in the off months, but this man has taken students to every continent except Antarctica."

"You'd think it was the greatest choir in the world."

Former student Graham Specht, 31, concurs. "I went on three tours through Asia and two to Central America with Bruce, and I married a Korean woman who's now at UVic. She and I went along on this trip to help out and I sang as well."

"Bruce has been very influential in my life and the lives of a lot of people."

What does More plan to do in retirement? "Anything I want!" he joked, adding he will likely spend more time volunteering at the new Our Place shelter, where he produces the monthly volunteer newsletter and also has installed and maintains a 1,500-volume paperback library.

"We saw a Third World country struggling to bring itself out of many horrors, but we also

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To my Dear Cousins:

John West
Ann Tasker
Billy West
Art More
Rosemarie Cook
Daryl West
Cally Kramer
Loraleigh Fitzgerald
Charles West
Barry West
Kathy Folk
Richard West
Dianne Scharfe
Helen Butler
Terry Eade
Ruth West
Linda West

In Memoriam

Arlene Klein
Marilyn Cotter
Donna Crook

Grampa returns from war - 1918

Poem by Grampa's sister Ruth Naomi West

I close my eyes on all around,
And allow my thoughts to roam,
Far from old England's hills and dales,
Over the seas to another home.

Swiftly they fly over mountains and lakes,
By rivers and valleys and forests forlorn;
Lingering awhile in the prairie wilds,
Then on through the golden, waving corn.

They wander on till their goal is reached,
Which is Alberta Province in Canada West.
Up to the capital, Edmonton,
At a cosy house they settle and rest.

Restful it is to gaze awhile
On that family group-each expectant face
Betrays the joy of a throbbing heart,
Dad is coming, his own armchair to grace.

"He's here!" Imagination's vain -
My thoughts are drowned in loving words and kisses.
Oh, the satisfaction in his eyes.
Daddy's realized at last his wishes!

One arm clasped round his faithful wife,
The other, methinks round Lally (Elsie?) and Jack;
Edna and Ted (Fred?) each claim a knee,
While Harold and Phil climb up on his back.

Baby Ken hangs round his mother's neck, He's rather shy.
Dad's been gone so long:
He left when Kenneth was six months old,
Before he could prattle his baby song.

At home again! Can it be true?
The space between them gone, and no more fighting.
None can conceive the joy they feel.
A happy family re-uniting.

Methinks I see the supper through,
The children gone obediently to bed,
Mother and Dad sit talking long,
Telling each other how they've been led.

How many sighs, how many tears,
Long months of separation cost them both.
'Tis sacred now, I will not pry.
Am loath.