

The Schola's Quarter Notes



The Schola
Cantorum
of the Pacific®

Q3/Q4 2019
Q1 2020

Three Quarter Notes

by Julio Maldonado

Greetings from the Schola!

This Quarter Note fills in the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2019 and Q1 of 2020. In this issue, we will cover our Anniversary Concert at the Marianist LaLanne House in the Los Angeles USC Campus and our Christmas concert with the children of Assumption School. We appreciate your support throughout the year and hope to continue to bring you quality articles and images.

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, our planned Sedona, AZ concert for the Easter season has been postponed until a future date. Our hearts and prayers go out to the people who have been affected by the virus. We wish everyone a safe and blessed Paschal season.

Inside this issue

Choir School, Full	2-3
Youth Choir	4
Reminiscence	5
Contribute	5
Pictures	6-7
Student Article	8
Pictures	9-10
KN6GLA	11

Special points of interest

- Creating a True Choir School for our Times
- Reminiscence
- Student Article
- Learn how to Contribute
- Pictures from our Events

Creating a True Choir School for Our Times



By Fr. Ted Ley, SM

A “school choir” is not a “choir school.” There is a big difference. We knew we could create a worthy “school choir” at Assumption. That was already an answer to a prayer: We could help revivify a venerable school in a needy neighborhood. But more has happened!

In a choir school as distinguished from a school choir, the children’s general studies – the “Three R’s” – are to large extent taught through choral music preparation and performance. This holistic approach is closer to home schooling than to age-related classes. And like home-schooled students, youth in choir schools often excel in national standardized tests.

But the curriculum has to be “just right.” For example, Escolania Pacifica students have as their Science Lab, the Physics of Sound, Electronics and

Communications. This type of lab utilizes Algebra and Geometry earlier than most middle school Science. The children of Assumption have run a campus radio broadcasting station for several years. We are now adding amateur radio, so more advanced students can pass the examinations and be assigned by the FCC their personal call letters and be able to join the American Radio Relay League.

There is an additional difference between “school choir” and “choir school.” Regular choirs enjoy a broad range of repertoire of light classics, popular and Broadway standards, in often excellent student arrangements albeit in unison or two parts, instrumentally supported. Classical and ceremonial music is more likely learned in a choir school or a conservatory.

Catholic Schools aim to prepare student cantors and musicians to lead congregations in hymns and antiphons with student accompaniment. A choir school teaches a broad historic and modern repertoire. Advanced choristers grow up singing Renaissance music and Gregorian Chant a cappella, and become skillful enough to perform with adult choir or symphony, music like the choral passages in Tchaikowsky’s Nutcracker or the Children’s scene in Bizet’s Carmen. Our Escolania begins

with Pre-K. The very young children's learned perception of pitch and tone gives them a head start in their musical progress.

Every student in a choir school learns a musical instrument. The principal instrument of our Escolania is Classical Guitar. The Schola has collected - and taught - over the years, harpsichord, clavichord, reed organ, grand piano, electronic keyboards; Elizabethan lute, guitar in the style of Early California, tenor viol, Renaissance and modern flutes, professional violins and mandolins, many percussion instruments including a great Jazz set, and folk instruments like guitarron, Puerto Rican cuatro, mountain dulcimer and Celtic harp.

A choir school education presages advanced pastoral music skills. Its thoroughness yields great ability to imagine, compose, arrange and lead congregational music. A choir school preserves the Church's "treasure of inestimable worth" - Chant, Polyphony, hymnody, the art of the organist. This broader knowledge prepares a young musician for a lifetime of Liturgical Music leadership.

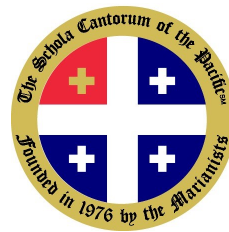
What about ceremonial music in general? Stylized performances of patriotic music are often inspirational,

yet there is still nothing quite like an authentic rendition of the National Anthem by the West Point Choir - or, the Children of the Escolania Pacifica.

Popular Music is normative in today's choir school. Our girls' quartet is currently singing Jerome Kern's "All the Things You Are." A vocal combo is learning, "Solamente Una Vez" - "You Belong to My Heart" - by Agustin Lara. The American Songbag contains outstanding musicality and poetry, uplifting while entertaining - essential in American musical life.

A choir school eventually achieves its own recognizable tone. Our latest surprise is that we seem to have acquired ours! Not silvery British nor resonant Austrian. Our "California tone" might be described as golden velvet. It seems to come naturally from our kids. We are listening in our repertoire for music that seems to bring out and encourage this wonderful tone.

A true choir school becomes a local educational treasure - the recognition to which we aspire for Assumption's and the Schola Cantorum's Escolania Pacifica.



Front cover picture: Vicente Bastidas conducting the choir school children at Assumption School's 70th anniversary mass celebrated by Regional Bishop David O'Connell

New Youth Choir Section

“Assumption Ambassadors”

Over the years, our “Schola Americana” teenagers and young adults have presented classical and popular music at such varied locations as the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, and the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, and nearby, the Capistrano Fiesta and the Huntington Library. Our current young men, high school age alumni of Assumption School, have formed a new Marianist Catholic youth group with Vicente Bastidas and Julio Maldonado as moderators. With their chosen name, “Assumption Ambassadors,” and the young ladies’ section to begin this summer, their ministry will be to provide contemporary Music for youth Masses and be part of all Schola and Escolania tours and activities. The boys have already begun their “family spirit activities” with a fishing trip around the Channel Islands sponsored by Mr. Rocco Fasone; and snowboarding in the San Gabriel Mountains led by Schola member, Marianist Affiliate Robert Montana of Wrightwood.



Valerie Vargas (Left) and Isaac Valencia (Right) at Lalanne House performing an instrumental piece of music from early California, Fandango.

Instrument Wish List

1. Violins, at least three, with bow and case.
2. Cellos, at least three, with bows and commuter bags.
3. Classical guitars, at least four, any sizes, with commuter bags.
4. A keyboard to be installed where students can practice after school.

The Schola policy is to retain ownership often eventually giving it to the student.



The Assumption Ambassadors boys' group receiving lessons from experienced snowboarding instructor and Schola member, Robert Montana, at Mountain High, January 2020.



Choir Reminiscence

By Luis Fernando Navarro

Being a nostalgic person by nature, my mind often wanders to memories of another time, a time where life's challenges were not as complex, but the decisions we made would mark the paths of our futures. Some of my favorite memories were of time spent with the choir and with Father Ley, outings to Wrightwood, to recording studios or to different churches throughout the western US (and of course the trip to



Luis Navarro pictured with his wife, Luisa.

Europe), going to or returning from practice or a performance. While the performances certainly were memorable, it was those opportunities of when I was able to sit in the front seat of the 16 passenger gray Ford van, listen to classical, country western, parlor music, or whatever profoundly human music Father was in the mood to enjoy. Then the conversations with Father, those seemingly indiscriminate, general conversations that unknowing to me, were preparing me for a life full of values, helping me refine the ability to analyze and come to decisions based in those values, which has been one of the key reasons that I feel fulfilled today. Father taught me to appreciate the detail of art, the significance of values, and the happiness that a life filled with both would provide.

Now that life has brought me back to Southern California, I feel truly fortunate to have crossed paths with Father and the choir again. I am grateful to be able to contribute whatever I can to Father's legacy as a sign of my tremendous respect and admiration for the man behind the choir. Schola is what it is today because of Father, and I, in many ways, am the person that I am today because of Father.

Contribute

Volunteer

Please, consider joining our adult choir. The adult choir is currently at St. John Chrysostom Church in Inglewood. We sing the 11:30am mass on most Sundays with practice at 10:00am in the annex room. We are always looking for more singers.

Donations by mail

Checks may be mailed:

The Schola Cantorum of
the Pacific

P.O. Box 171,
Wrightwood, CA 92397

Donations online

PayPal Donations are
available through our
website:

[www.pacificschola.org/
donations](http://www.pacificschola.org/donations)

AmazonSmile

Add us to AmazonSmile
0.5% of your purchases
on Amazon through
AmazonSmile will be
contributed to our
mission. This will not
increase the cost of your
purchases.

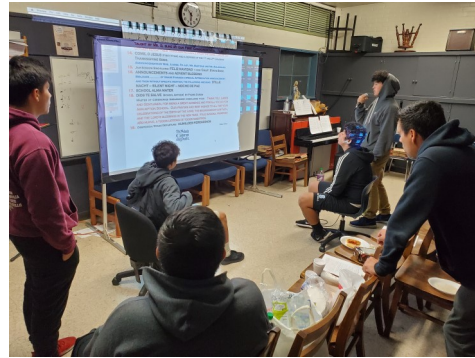


Above: Concert reception at the Marianist Lalanne House, University Park

Below: Summer Fishing Trip with Mr. Rocco Fasone, Channel Islands



Right: Regional Bishop David O'Connell with the Assumption students for their singing of the school's 70th Anniversary Mass, Sunday, October 20, 2019.



Above: Assumption Ambassadors at the Campus Choir Student

Below: Christmas Concert Program at Assumption Parish Hall



My Experience with the Escolanía

By Alisa Benitez



Alisa Benitez shown in performance at the Ely, No concert.

I am Alisa Benitez. I have been with the Escolanía for 6 years and I have loved it since the moment I heard Assumption School would be getting a music program. I was in the second grade when Father Ted and Mr. Vicente came to us. It was really awkward the first day of music class because nobody had ever taken music lessons before and I am sure Mr. Vicente had no clue how to work with us kids. Nonetheless, our music classes in the future went well. The graduating class, my class, has been with Mr. Vicente and Father Ted the longest out of all other students. We were the youngest class they took for lessons when they first arrived and now in our last

year at our school, Mr. Vicente has taken the position as full time teacher. When I heard the news it was a completely full circle moment.

Whenever in class, I would always listen and focus on the piano that Father Ted played gracefully. I thought that the piano was the most beautiful instrument and I still do. I just remember thinking that if I could play piano, I could play all my favorite songs and the instrument was just so beautiful that I could not resist. I asked my mother if she could sign me up for piano lessons and luckily, she did. That was about 5 years ago. Now, I play the piano very well and I do not think that I would have learned that I had this passion for music without the Escolania. I very much appreciate music and I adore making it.

I think that my favorite part about working with Father Ted and Mr. Vicente is that I feel very welcomed by them and I have since Day 1. I have never really had a steady father figure in my life but these two have been great role models. Father Ted is one of the kindest people I have ever met and probably will ever meet. He is just so warm and is the human equivalent of a ray of sunshine. Mr. Vicente is such an accepting person. What I really admire about him is that he treats us students as young adults with the same respect that he would give to anyone. I find this extremely admirable because his classroom is a place that you can feel comfortable in. I could not imagine dallying in a teacher's room, but music class is somewhere anyone can go and I think it is because of how welcoming Mr. Vicente is to his students.

Continued next page

My Experience with the Escolanía, continued

A great part of being in the Escolania is the traveling. I love the concerts we get to make as a choir group. The first place the choir traveled to for a concert was Montecito. It was beautiful there and I loved it. All my friends were there, and I felt so happy to be part of something so amazing. I felt even happier in the next place we traveled to which was Ely, Nevada. It is the smallest little town and I absolutely loved it. It was so beautiful, and I cannot stress it enough. My favorite memory from there was when we went to a lake and it was absolutely freezing. I think I am still defrosting. I love traveling with the choir and I have played a piano piece for both performances. I cannot put into words the appreciation I have for the Escolania and where it has taken me (literally and figuratively). I love what our music teachers have done for my school and I cannot wait to see what they have in store for the future.

Retrospect



Above: Roman Navarro in his traje de luces, made by Mrs. Pam Horn. This was taken in the Upper Room of the Old Church of St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Gardena, which housed our studio, 1982 to 1992.



Above: In 2002, Schola youth, after singing Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Exeter, CA, went to Sequoia National Park where today's Escolania Guitar teacher, Julio Maldonado, then 15, played Lagrima by Tarrega, at the General Sherman Tree! Could this have been the first time anyone ever played guitar at the world's largest tree? This is our question for the Guinness Book of records.

Success WE BUILD UPON!

Here are some great vintage pictures from our collection, from various sources. Alumni, do you have a picture to recommend? Let us know by email, general@pacificschola.org. Each edition we will feature these photos.



Left: Warm-up before Mass at Old Mission San Juan Capistrano, our original home church, with student conductor Carl Landry, 1984. Saturday evening Masses at the Mission were sung twice monthly by our teenage choristers, in Father Serra's Chapel, from 1977 to 1985.



Left: Joseph Kelly, student conductor, with the Schola singing "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," on the steps of the Capitol building, Washington, DC, Summer 1986. The Schola gave its concert at the Lincoln Memorial to a surprisingly large audience. For though the concert was approved by the Presidential Parkway authorities, there had been no prior announcement.

KN6GLA IS ON THE AIR!

This past December 19, the Schola Foundation was granted for Assumption School, a student amateur radio club license and call sign by the Federal Communications Commission. As call signs go, it was the “luck of the draw,” as KN6GLA suggests “Greater L.A.” But the choice of name was ours: “Evergreen Service Radio.” Assumption is on Evergreen Avenue, and even student radio amateurs help with communications in the event of a serious local emergency.

KN6GLA adds to our students’ Physics Lab studies in Radio Technology, Electronics, Recording and Sound. While Assumption is a magnet school in Musical and Communication Arts, the Science dimension is not being ignored. Students in as early as fourth grade can study Radio and Electronics, Acoustics and other aspects of the Physics of processed and recorded Sound. The American Radio Relay League (ARRL), the national association of radio amateurs, sponsors nationwide activities and projects for student clubs. Student amateurs worldwide during Jamboree On the Air (JOTA) create an international event not to be missed.

Local “ham” radio operators are contributing to Assumption’s broadcast “rig” in our new Studio B. Adult Schola leaders and benefactors with amateur licenses help supervise. When those who have the full license, like Fr. Ted, supervise, our club members can use the long-distance shortwave bands in addition to the more readily available higher frequencies. Students can earn their own licenses; three boys are currently preparing for their Technician Class exam. Students who attain their FCC license and call sign will receive from the Schola and Assumption School, a gift of their first handheld transceiver.

Meanwhile our campus micropower FM station continues broadcasting, now from Studio B. Each Tuesday for a few minutes after lunch, FCC-approved Evergreen Campus Radio provides school news, interviews, announcements and short programs. These students learn broadcast protocol and contribute to the Communications culture of our magnet school.



Eighth graders, l. to r., Benjamin Partida (Staff Announcer), Noe Ramirez (Program Director) and Oscar Zavaleta (Station Engineer) at a weekly Evergreen Campus Radio micropower FM broadcast. The radio crew is now also FCC licensed KN6GLA student amateur radio club.

The Schola Cantorum of the Pacific

P.O. Box 171

Wrightwood, CA 92397-0171

The Schola Cantorum of the Pacific is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Our mission is to preserve and develop the future of the Catholic Church's music by providing a music education to our youths and continually improving our choral tone and quality.

The Schola's Quarter Notes

Thank you so much for your support throughout the years.

We are happy that we are able to share with you our current activities.

In Q3/Q4 2019 and Q1 2020 of the Newsletter, you will find the following topics and stories:

- Creating a True Choir School for Our Times (Full Article)
- An article from one of our Escolania students
- Escolania Christmas Concert at Assumption School
- Announcement of new youth choir section
- Many pictures from our events

The Schola Cantorum
of the Pacific

P.O. Box 171

Wrightwood, CA 92397-0171

Phone: 310-864-8433

E-mail: general@pacificschola.org

The Schola
Cantorum
of the Pacific®