

VINTAGE CHRISTMAS RECORDING

A primary goal of Valpo ArtsMedia has been to connect the exceptional work of the visual and performing arts at Valparaiso University to our alumni and friends. The compact disc, *Heaven and Nature Sing*, seeks to create this connection in a new, slightly different way.

The process began several years ago with the discovery of record albums that were in the university archives, personal collections and even a closet here and there. Upon listening to the recordings and looking at the album artwork, it was obvious that these gems could easily be connected to countless memories of Christmas past. Some of the fondest recollections of those who had attended, taught or worked at Valparaiso University are of the annual Christmas celebrations.

Heaven and Nature Sing was created to awaken these memories. The tracks are in chronological order, beginning with 78rpm recordings of the A Cappella Choir under the direction of Richard Schoenbohm. The selections from these early recordings are very traditional. The next two tracks are from the 1956 concert featuring a composition from M. Alfred Bischel, the conductor of the University Chapel Choir and an arrangement by Theodore Hoelty-Nickel, a member of the music department faculty. This concert was performed in the Hiltop gymnasium due to the fact that the university chapel\auditorium was destroyed by a fire few weeks before the concert. The 1957 Christmas Concert featured portions of the *Messiah* by Handel, it was also performed in the Hiltop gymnasium. A classic photo on the album is of the choirs in the bleachers, orchestra on the court and a basketball backboard in the background.

After the selections from the *Messiah*, a significant change in the audio quality and overall sound occurs. The Christmas concert in 1958 is the first concert in the Memorial Chapel, later named the Chapel of the Resurrection. The warm, reverberant acoustics of this landmark started a new era of performances for the university community and has been home to the annual Christmas concert since.

The last several tracks on the *Heaven and Nature Sing* compact disc are from the album entitled *Christmas*, recorded in 1978 by the Schola Cantorum under the direction of Frederick H. Telschow. This recording also marked the end of the record album as the distribution media for university recordings. In 1993 compact disc *Behold, What Wonder!* by the Concert Choir under the direction of Eldon Balko was released, marking the beginning of the digital age for Valparaiso University music.

New Packaging

Heaven and Nature Sing is also packaged differently than traditional compact discs. It is designed to be sent as a Christmas greeting from eco-friendly products. The packaging material is completely recyclable and was created from recycled materials.

Choral History of Valparaiso University

Any journey through the known recording history of choral music at Valparaiso University would not be complete without mention of the conductors and ensemble

Christmas Concert-Valparaiso University
members. Throughout the decades the names of the ensembles and members have changed, but the dedication to excellent music has not. In January 2009 research will begin the process of assembling the history of choral music at Valparaiso University. The goal of this research is to create a comprehensive accounting of those who have lead and sung in this great university tradition., along with the recollections of concerts, tours and community.

If you would like to contribute to this research, please contact us at valpo.chorale@valpo.edu or

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