

“These Songs Send Shivers Up my Spine”

By David Rain

It was with great excitement eight years ago that long-time New Edinburgh resident **Bill Driver** first auditioned for the renowned Ottawa choir, the **Stairwell Carollers**.

Bill, a retired bank executive, fell instantly in love with the

that have won awards across Canada,” Bill relates.

The Carollers were founded by Pierre in the stairwells of Ottawa University in 1977, and have gone on to win a provincial competition and place second at the national level.

Bill has recently participated



Photo: Courtesy of Stairwell Carollers

Bill Driver has been an enthusiastic member of the Stairwell Carollers for the past eight years.

Carollers’ pure style of singing, without instrumental accompaniment. “To me, a cappella singing is the most delightful form of choral music. Performing the close harmonies of madrigals and traditional Christmas pieces still sends shivers up my spine when we get the moving chords **JUST RIGHT!**”

Bill also enjoys the diversity of musical styles and languages, as the Stairwell Carollers have recorded an extensive repertoire of songs in many languages, including Welsh, Old and Modern Spanish, German, Latin and Huron, in addition to French and English.

“Director Pierre Massie constantly provides us with his new arrangements of old favorites, as well as some of his original compositions

in the recording of the choir’s beautiful seventh CD, “*Cantate Domino*”. When the Carollers perform their Christmas concert in Manor Park on December 19, their new CD

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will be on sale for lovers of sacred music (also at *Books on Beechwood*). Incidentally, the concert title “*Eya, eya, gaud-eamus*”, refers to an award-winning Christmas carol composed by Pierre Massie that will be featured in the program.

Bill is also impressed by the choir’s humanitarian mission. “I have never before sung in a group that consistently gives its profits from concerts and CD sales to worthy local charities, and still has funds left over to endow two annual University music scholarships to Ottawa-area high-school students!” A total of \$45,000 has been donated to local charities and \$11,000 given as music scholarships.

This Christmas, the Carollers will be making a special \$2,000 donation to the youth literacy group, Sage Youth – Jeunesse Sage, based in Richmond, south of Ottawa.

Bill would like to invite all his New Edinburgh neighbours to the choir’s concert of diverse Christmas carols at **St Columba Church (24 Sandridge Road) on Wednesday December 19 at 7:30 pm.** “You’ll hear some great music and help out local charities as well!”

Tickets will be available at the door for \$20, or in

advance for \$15 from *Books on Beechwood*, 35 Beechwood Ave; *The Leading Note*, 370 Elgin St; *Compact Music*, 190 & 785 1/2 Bank St; or online at www.stairwellcarollers.com.

If you can’t make it to St Columba, you can still hear the Stairwell Carollers on one of these dates:

December 1: Almonte United Church, 106 Elgin St, Almonte, 7:30 pm.

December 7: Église St. Matthieu, 69 rue de Provence, Gatineau, 7:30 pm.

December 8: St-James Anglican Church, 225 Edmund St, Carleton Place, 7:30 pm.

December 9: Great Hall, National Gallery of Canada, 380 Sussex Drive, 3:00 pm.

December 15: Glebe St James United Church, 650 Lyon St, 7:30 pm.

David Rain, a regular shopper at the old Loeb store on Beechwood, is in his 20th year with the choir. For more information, please visit www.stairwellcarollers.com.

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