

Choral Ensemble is Fertile Ground for future Westwinds Members

In six of the last seven years of the Choral Ensemble's existence, members (or spouses) have produced an offspring destined to have a life filled with music – and hopefully comprised of Westwinds experiences along the way.

Our most recent “addition” has been little Eric, born to Laurie Munteer and Thomas Yoon on December 10th (the night of our Christmas concert at the Jubilee Auditorium).

Thomas and Laurie's story is a true Westwinds tale. Laurie joined Westwinds in September of 1996 as a member of the first Women's Choir. She joined the Red Band a year later, having discovered that she could manage two rehearsals a week. She ultimately moved on to Choral Ensemble and Purple Band as the years went by and her musical skills developed. Laurie met Thomas in June, 2004 and when September arrived and with it the start-up of a new Westwinds season, she took Thomas along to Open House and “encouraged” him to audition for the Choral Ensemble, promising that Mike Gardner wouldn't bite. Laurie and Thomas continued to make beautiful music together. Laurie plays flute and sings soprano and Thomas, trombone and tenor in the Silver Band and Choral Ensemble respectively. In 2005 they travelled with Westwinds to Scotland singing and playing in the choir and band. Little did Laurie know that Thomas had been hatching a plot to be sprung at a concert on Scotland. That spring, Thomas had been learning Josh Groban's “You Raise Me Up” as a solo which he edited to include a marriage proposal for Laurie. He used to go out into a field near his work at noon hour so he could practise. However, the mosquitoes drove him inside and he actually rented a room at Irene Besse's so he could practise without swatting or suffering. Marie Lewin – our Westwinds choir accompanist in Scotland – helped him out and Mike Gardner was also in on the scheme. Laurie was not the only one who was surprised when, near the end of the first concert of the tour, Mike announced that there was a special performance on the program. Thomas did a fantastic job of his solo/proposal and there was not a dry eye in the house among the Westwinds performers or the Scottish audience. Fortunately, Laurie said yes. The wedding took place in July 2006 and members of the Choral Ensemble were thrilled to be able to sing

and celebrate with them. Laurie and Thomas have now begun their family. Laurie says her favourite things about Westwinds are the rehearsals and performances, along with the many friends they have made. Truly a full circle story with a Westwinds theme.