

Celebrating song

By Stephen Snyder, Times Staff Writer Carroll County Times, Friday, April 22, 2005

BRENDAN BUSH/STAFF PHOTO



Diane Jones directs the Children's Chorus of Carroll County as they prepare for a performance with various adults from the community Sunday at McDaniel College.

Diane Jones knows singing isn't just for children.

So Jones, director of the Children's Chorus of Carroll County, invited adults from the community to perform in the chorus' concert Sunday at McDaniel College.

"This is to really celebrate the joy, the art and love of singing over the course of a lifetime," she said.

Adults performing include Joe and Audrey Cimino, Kim Bowers, Melanie Roelke, Chris Rudy and Shannon Kiser.

Jones wanted to show the children adult performers from all walks of life.

"No matter who you are or where you are, you can still be involved in singing and be passionate about it," she said.

The adult performers chose their own music. Melanie Roelke, a special education teacher at West Middle School, will perform a piece from the Mozart opera "Marriage of Figaro."

"I really like the opera style," Roelke said.

Roelke sings with the Masterworks Chorale of Carroll County and sang as an undergraduate with the Penn State Concert Choir. She's studying voice with a teacher in Bel Air.

Roelke said she hopes to show children that singing doesn't have to stop at high school. She continued to sing in college even though she majored in education.

"There's a lot of options, even if you aren't a music major," she said.

Kim Bowers sings in the choir at the Westminster First Church of the Nazarene and once sang at the Romanian Embassy, where she performed the Romanian national anthem.

Bowers was shy growing up, but overcame it singing in the church choir. She started taking voice lessons at Peabody Conservatory at 15.

"Even the most shy child in the world can bloom and grow with the right teacher to guide them," she said.

One of Jones' focuses is getting boys to continue singing into adulthood.

"We've had a lot of talented boys who, when they left us, they never sang again," Jones said.

Chris Rudy, a senior at North Carroll High School, started singing with the children's chorus when he was 7.

"They were my first group. I didn't know what chorus was," Rudy recalled.

But Rudy discovered he liked it and now sings with multiple groups at North Carroll. He said he hopes to make performing his career.

Rudy said that what inspired him to keep singing were the children's chorus and the now defunct Westminster Conservatory for the Arts, where he starred in a production of "Oliver" in eighth grade.

"I've been kind of lucky with these music programs," he said.

Audrey and Joe Cimino met while performing in a production of "Man of La Mancha" at the Spotlights Theatre in 1974. The two have continued to sing together in the Masterworks Chorale and also in their own duo "Timeless Tunes by Two," in which they perform songs from the 1930s through the 1980s at parties and social functions.

The two will sing "All I Ask of You" from "The Phantom of the Opera."

"It's something that we do well together," Audrey Cimino said.

Jones said she hopes the children in the chorus, as well as the audience, will enjoy the range of music and styles performed by adults at the concert.

"I wanted them to see a panoply of different voices and styles and let them know they're real people," Jones said.

Reach staff writer Stephen Snyder at 410-857-7862 or ssnyder@leniofind.com.