

## **2010 AVICC AGM & Convention**

### **Annual Banquet Biographical Information for the Performers**

#### **DON JAMES**

Don James, CM is founder and artistic director of the Powell River Academy of Music, the International Choral Kathaumixw and the Symphony Orchestra Academy of the Pacific. He holds diplomas and degrees in piano performance, music theory and literature, and orchestral conducting from the University of Toronto, Seattle Pacific University and the University of Washington. Mr. James has served as president of the association of Canadian Choral Conductors, the British Columbia Association of Community Music Schools and as Canada's representative on the board of the International Federation for Choral Music Board, a board member of the British Columbia Choral Federation and is a member of the Music Committee of the World Choir Games.

#### **WALTER MARTELLA**

Walter Martella, a charter member of the Powell River Boys Choir, has returned to his hometown to conduct choirs where he began his musical training. A graduate of the University of Victoria, Mr. Martella furthered his conducting studies with Don James and Dr. Elmer Iseler. Mr. Martella is an accomplished trumpet soloist and jazz pianist. As well as conducting the Boys Choir and the Academy Singers, he also is the conductor of the Powell River Chorus and the Powell River Community Band.

#### **MEGAN SKIDMORE, soprano**

Megan is a dedicated and versatile teacher and performer. Her performance credits include opera; musical theatre, oratorio and recital work in settings as diverse as Vancouver Island, Montreal and Austria. She received both her Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees in Voice Performance from McGill University. She has studied at the Wiener Meisterkurze in Vienna, the Mozarteum in Salzburg and the Franz Schubert Institute in Baden bei Wien. Ms. Skidmore recently joined the Powell River Academy of Music faculty as a voice teacher and music director for the new Musical Theatre class. She also maintains a busy voice studio in Comox. Ms. Skidmore and Ms. Hagen have been collaborating for many years both on Vancouver Island and in Montreal.

#### **MARYNA GRAY, pianist**

Pianist Maryna Gray holds a Masters Degree in piano pedagogy and accompanying from the Kharkiv State Institute of the Arts, Ukraine. She has 20 years experience as a piano teacher, solo performer and as accompanist for instrumentalists and vocalists. Ms. Gray joins us from Brandon University where she has completed further studies in piano performance and has been the accompanist for the Brandon University Chorale, student recitals and juries, in addition to teaching piano in the Brandon community.

#### **POWELL RIVER TRAD BAND**

The Powell River Trad Band, directed by Cathy Reckenberg, is a group of local musicians who perform music from the Celtic traditions of Canada, Scotland and Ireland. In its second year as an ensemble, they play arrangements of brand new as well as historic repertoire, and do most of the arranging themselves. The Trad Band is currently fundraising for an exchange in the summer of 2010 in Scotland, where they will be hosted by young musicians, attend an international trad music camp, and tour as a performing ensemble. Before traveling overseas, they will host a group of Scottish musicians on the Sunshine Coast for two weeks in an exchange that will strengthen the formal connection growing between these two regions.

**ACADEMY CHAMBER CHOIR**

The Academy Chamber Choir consists of thirty-five singers from a wide variety of backgrounds and professions. It is an amateur choir that, since its inception in 1994, has developed into one of Canada's dynamic chamber choirs. The choir specializes in a cappella music from the Middle Ages to the 20<sup>th</sup> century and regularly commissions new works by Canadian composers. Under the direction of Don James, the Academy Chamber Choir has toured in Venezuela, the Czech Republic, Canada, Mexico, Spain and France.