

Bruce Vantine's
**CORNERSTONE
CHORALE AND BRASS**

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“Cornerstone is a voice of sanity in a chaotic world.”

- Anne Keefe (1925-2015)

Legendary broadcaster and Cornerstone special guest narrator
CBS NEWS / KMOX Radio

REMEMBERING & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

June 1986 - Bruce & Cindy Vantine at the *Chorus America (APVE)* conference in San Francisco. Conversations with **LOUIS BOTTO** (*Chanticleer*), **ROGER WAGNER** (*Roger Wagner Chorale - CA*), **GREGG SMITH** (*Gregg Smith Singers - NY*), **PAUL HILL** (*Paul Hill Chorale - DC*).

Sept. 1986 - Dinner with **DR. RICHARD C. SHAW** & **MARY ANN SHAW** - RE: planning creation of a paid professional ensemble recruited nationwide and dedicated to presenting high quality music with narration to encourage people to live their faith at a higher level of commitment in service to people in need.

Fall 1987 - **THOMPSON CENTER** - an ecumenical retreat center in St. Louis - accepts Cornerstone under its non-profit umbrella through 1990 when Cornerstone establishes 501(c)3 non-profit status.

Spring & Fall 1987

VANTINE VISITS DENOMINATIONAL OFFICES

RE: the Cornerstone project, including the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, Episcopal Ch. Center-NYC, regional office United Methodist Ch.-Nashville, Giddings-Lovejoy Presbytery- St. Louis, Presbyterian Ch. Center (PCUSA) & the Southern Baptist Seminary-Louisville, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Louis, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod -St. Louis, & the ELCA Lutheran headquarters in Chicago.

Dec. 1987 - **FIRST BOOKING TRIP** to arrange the premiere tour of *The Cornerstone Chorale & Brass*.

May - July 1988 - The first Cornerstone open **AUDITIONS:** St. Louis, New York-Carnegie Hall, Chicago, Kansas City, Memphis & Minneapolis.

Oct.-Nov. 1988 - **FIRST TOUR** of *The Cornerstone Chorale & Brass*: 32 paid professional vocalists, instrumentalists, narrators & staff from across the U.S. gather for 5 days rehearsal at *Thompson Retreat Center* in St. Louis, followed by a 24-day concert tour debut in 5 Midwestern states from Texas to Wisconsin.

Leads to a 2017 total of:

**463 CORNERSTONE CHORALE & BRASS
PERFORMANCES:**

**Lifting Spirits, Raising Awareness
& Raising Funds.**

Cornerstone has worked with more than
160 charities nationwide (1988-2017)

Feb. 20, 1989 - Commendation: **THE GIRAFFE AWARD**



Whereas: sticking one's neck out for the Common Good is an inspiration to all;

Whereas: such Risk-taking is vital to a compassionate, peaceful and just world;

Whereas: The Giraffe Project is commissioned to seek out such

Risk-takers and to honor them for their deeds;

The Giraffe Project

herewith declares Bruce Vantine to be a Giraffe: whose courageous actions illumine all our lives making manifest the Truth that people who believe in themselves and care for others can meet any challenge life presents.

*Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States, received a Giraffe Award for his work with Habitat for Humanity in weeks prior to this commendation.

Nov. 1989 - **MILLARD FULLER**, RE: Performance at *Habitat for Humanity Center*, Americus, GA

“The power of the choir and brass not only stems from their superior performance, but from their incredible emotional intensity as well. Their message of God's compassion sprang from their hearts. They are truly an outstanding ensemble.”

April 1991 - Special performance: **NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON CHRISTIAN UNITY** - Basilica of Saint Louis, the King (Old Cathedral), St. Louis.

July 1991 - Nomination - **THOUSAND POINTS OF LIGHT:** *The White House, Washington D.C.*

“Thank you for your commitment to community service. Through your generosity and hard work, you have shown that the tradition of neighbor helping neighbor is alive and well in our country.

Your efforts profoundly influence the lives of many Americans and are a shining example for us all.



Barbara joins me in saluting you and sending you our best wishes. God bless you.”

GEORGE H. W. BUSH

41st President of the United States

[TIMELINE CONTINUES ON BACK]

Nov. 16, 1991 – **CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**, Sacramento CA – Benefit: Francis House, Gregory Bunker, Executive Director

“Your performance reminded us all of our great heritage and, while defining the seriousness of our problems, gives hope. I left the church with a feeling that, it’s bad, but by God and with God we can do something about it. The feedback from those attending was overwhelmingly enthusiastic!”

Feb. 10, 1993 – **TOLEDO, OH** – Christ Presbyterian Church, Willa J. Conrad, music critic, *The Toledo Blade*

“The idea is intriguing...Judeo-Christian principles of living through the medium of words and music. *The Metro-Toledo Churches United* sponsored the visit. The musical selections were varied and arresting, and the choir was immaculately chosen for clarity of individual voices and a good blend. The use of brass, percussion and flute for dramatic accent was great.”

Mar. 12, 1993 – **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CENTER (PCUSA)**, Louisville KY – Donald R. Purkey, Chaplain

“Your visit graced our lives....The sounds were sublime and the message profound. Your theme, *Beside the Still Waters*, was particularly pertinent for us here...as we face reorganization and downsizing. All who reflected on the gift you shared with us were unanimous in their praise and gratitude.”

PETER THOMAS (1924-2016)

Emmy & Academy Award winning narrator of HBO, Discovery Channel & signature voice of NBC News joins *Cornerstone* on tour in 1995, 1996, 1997.



“Nothing does more to spread the Word of God to audiences all over America than *Cornerstone*. It is a brilliant and exciting presentation that should not be missed.”

Nov. 7, 1995 – **LINCOLN CENTER** for the performing Arts
Benefit: The Racial Justice programs of *The Riverside Church* – Ken Smith, music critic, *NY Concert Review*

“*The Cornerstone Chorale & Brass* is a top-notch Ensemble with a high level of musicianship. Vantine’s 20 singers are superb, worthy of any studio.



The choir demonstrates a fine blend of vocal quality with dead-center pitch and rhythmic precision most vocal ensembles would kill for. The brass quintet is crisp, carefully balanced within itself and with the chorus....

The evening provided a message of great importance.”

Nov. 7, 1995 – **THE REV. DR. JAMES A. FORBES**, Senior Minister, *The Riverside Church-City of New York*

“I hope *Cornerstone* will come back to New York another year to perform at *The Riverside Church*.”

Nov. 1996 – **POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY**, San Diego CA – Dr. Keith A. Pagan, Music Dept.

“All of those present walked away with saying ‘Wow!’...an apt observation on the power or your creativity in designing the program.”

Nov. 1, 1996 – **SANTA FE, NM** – Norma Lynn, music critic *Arts Alive! and Well*

“Those who hold the [*Santa Fe*] *Desert Chorale* in high esteem would have treasured this truly gifted ensemble [*Cornerstone*]....one of the best mixed choirs I’ve heard....astounding clarity and technique....exciting dynamics. All solo voices showed unique beautiful tone quality...superb musicality and musicianship. The brass ensemble was very solid, tastefully and technically proficient, a very satisfying, first rate sound.

The ensemble is drawn nationally from the *crème de la crème*. All participants have many impressive credits. What a pleasure to hear such a wonderful sound produced with such freedom and yet with such control....interesting, very rich, in-depth and energetic music making....Don’t miss them!”

Oct. 2001 – **TACOMA, WA** – Dr. Kenneth Christopherson, Pacific Lutheran University, Dept. of Theology

“...as fine a concert as I have ever heard...superbly seamless integration that somehow told the whole Christian story. As a musician and theologian, I found the obvious and underlying theology of music and word to be solid and refreshingly Christian...a thrilling and edifying ministry through music and language.”

July 2007 – *Manchester United Methodist Church*, St. Louis MO – Special performance: **THE FELLOWSHIP OF UNITED METHODISTS IN MUSIC & WORSHIP ARTS** summer conference.

Oct. 11, 2009 – **CARNEGIE HALL** – New York NY
Benefit: Inner city charitable programs of *The Riverside Church* – Barrett Cobb, music critic, *NY Concert Review*

“I’ve never encountered anything quite like *The Courage to Care*, – presented by Bruce Vantine’s *Cornerstone Chorale & Brass*....



Part church service, part *Passion play*, part concert, this program assumes a unique form: [a medium encouraging individuals] to use time, talents and resources to minister to our brothers and sisters in need...

The diction of the narrators and singers was exemplary.... The Chorale excelled...with beautiful sound, excellent intonation, and sincerity...singing everything by memory...Equally skilled was the brass quintet....

The audience loved it, as they demonstrated with a standing ovation.”

