

For Ryan Turner and the Newburyport Choral Society
With apologies to Clement Clarke Moore and Santa

November 2020

‘Twas some months before Christmas and all of the chorus
knew that we faced challenges looming before us.
George Case was departing – the Southwest was calling.
What terrible fate upon us was befalling?

The Board of Directors were snug in their beds
while visions of sad singers danced in their heads.
But they couldn’t allow choral chaos to reign,
so they rose the next morning; their mission was plain.

That Mary Ann Lachat, so lively and slick,
called all of her helpers to get to work quick.
“Now, Heaton! Now, Greenberg!, Now, Moreland times two!
Now Starr, Cox, Disette and Smith, we’ve work to do.
To the Board meeting now, we must put out the call
for the very best, brightest conductor of all.”

And so they commenced with the business of reading
through resumes, tossing some out with the weeding.
At last the pile got whittled down to just three,
thanks to all the hard work of our Search Committee.

Then we all got together to try out the choices.
We stretched and we breathed and we lifted our voices.
We felt very hopeful with each of the first two,
whose talents and knowledge were certainly on view.

But then in a twinkling, there pranced down the aisle
A lively musician, who wore a broad smile.
And he moved so swiftly, our heads “turner”ed ‘round,
As up on the stage Ryan leapt with a bound!

And it didn’t take “long”y for us to all see
that we surely had found our new leader-to-be.
Yet no one could foresee what the future would bring –
a pandemic when it was deemed dangerous to sing!

Ryan traded his baseball bat for his baton,
and instructed his helpers, “The show must go on!”
So they met and they brainstormed, they thought and debated,
and by summer’s end they had deftly created
a program for autumn designed to enlighten,
Inform, and instruct, and most certainly brighten
our Tuesday nights as the sun slowly departed,
“The Promise of Living” had just gotten started!

Each week Ryan slipped into our homes as reliable
as Santa at Christmas, though 'twas undeniable
that the chimney would not be a practical means
of transport, so we just had to settle for screens.

But the gifts that he gave us were truly the best.
We learned lots about singing in head and in chest.
We heard how our biology dictates our sound,
We found that composers of color abound.
Ryan did what a good teacher always should do –
Explored right along with us and shared what he knew.
He enabled the very best in everyone,
And reminded us all learning never is done.

We sure won't forget posture – a verb, not a noun,
and we'll keep ourselves limber, arms sway up and down.
But as Thanksgiving nears what we mostly recall
Is how grateful we've felt for our NCS fall.

Now it's time to Zoom out with a wink and a click
and the briefest apology to old St. Nick.
But let's all exclaim as we drop out of sight,
“Happy Holidays all and to all a good night!”