

**Troubadours** were medieval composers and singers, who travelled Europe spreading the news of the day through song. *The Troubadour* is the newsletter of the New Brunswick Choral Federation, a non-profit arts organization dedicated to spreading choral music throughout New Brunswick.

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*Let New Brunswick Sing!*

**PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE:  
 JOIN THE CHORUS**



This is my first message since assuming the office of president at our AGM during Spring Choral Fest this past March. We had our first board meeting in Saint John in late June where we welcomed five of our new board members (Laurel Boone, Gordon Chapman, Catherine Macdonald, Jayne Nicki and Robert Selby), who joined our “more experienced” members to begin making plans for the 2008-09 choral season.

These plans include a Sunday afternoon invitational workshop for three conductors and their choirs, to be held at Wilmot United Church in Fredericton under the direction of Noel Edison, the charismatic conductor of the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and the Elora Festival Singers. During the first hour of the workshop, the conductors will receive master-class level instruction in the art of conducting. During the second hour, their choristers will form a massed choir to refine the principles of good choral technique, and that same evening the Fredericton Playhouse will present the Elora Festival Singers in concert. Other plans for the coming season include “conductor in the schools” sessions in Moncton and Fredericton and auditions for our first New Brunswick Youth Choir ensemble, to be held at Mount Allison University in the spring of 2009. Of course, planning is also well underway for Spring Choral Fest 2009, which will take place March 20-22 at St. Mark’s United Church in Saint John, with the popular Dr. Douglas Dunsmore of Festival 500 back as guest conductor.

Also at our board meeting in June, a search committee was formed to hire a new executive director to replace Lisa Alward, our current director. Lisa is a tough act to follow; however, we are making progress and should be able to name our new director in a few weeks. Watch as well for our newly redesigned website, coming soon at [www.nbchoral.org](http://www.nbchoral.org). And, finally, please encourage choirs and individuals in your area to become members of the NBCF. Singing is good for your health (see Mary Lou Petersen’s stirring tribute to choirs on p. 5 — so join the chorus to *Let New Brunswick Sing!*

Norma Blanchet

**WHAT’S INSIDE**

President’s Message: .....	1
Experiencing NYC 2008.....	2
Podium 2008: A Conductor’s Diary .....	3
Singing Out at Spring Choral Fest.....	5
Singing Around the Province .....	6
An Interview with Noel Edison .....	8
From Our Library .....	8
Helping NB Sing: Fishermen’s Friends .....	9
ACCC Connections .....	10

## EXPERIENCING NYC 2008

Shawn Potter

This past May saw a flurry of choral activity focused around the 2008 Podium conference at Mount Allison University in Sackville, including the Maritime tour of the National Youth Choir of Canada. Four young choristers, Angel McNeil, April Boudreau, Alex Clark and myself, had the great honor of representing New Brunswick as part of this choir.

The National Youth Choir (NYC) is a biennial program of the Association of Canadian Choral Communities (ACCC). Singers between the ages of 18 and 25 audition in their home provinces, with each province sending a quartet to participate in the two-week residency and concert tour. Established in 1984, the choir has sung at every Podium conference since its inception, as well as at the 1993 World Symposium on Choral Music in Vancouver. Performances



Shawn Potter, Angel McNeil, April Boudreau & Alex Clark at SCF 2008.

have also been broadcast on CBC Radio, including this year's Podium concert on June 29. Previous conductors of NYC have included Jon Washburn, Wayne Riddell, Elmer Iseler, Diane Loomer and Lydia Adams.

This year the choir was hosted at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, Nova Scotia. Here we were only a short walk from Truro First Baptist Church where the majority of rehearsals were held. We started arriving throughout the day on May 4, and, sure enough, the good people of Truro were waiting at the airport and bus station all day to pick us up — including the group from British Columbia, which arrived at 1 am! Rehearsals started the next morning at nine, and we finally got to meet this year's conductor: Dr. Julian Wachner.

Dr. Wachner is currently associate professor of music and principal conductor for Opera McGill at the Schulich School of Music, McGill University. As one of North America's most versatile conductors, he is active as a conductor of choral, orchestral and operatic repertoire. In addition, he is an active composer, with works such as the opera *Evangeline Revisited*, written for the hundredth

anniversary of the Schulich School of Music.

Monday morning brought the beginning of an intense week of choral singing. With well over an hour of music to learn, there wasn't a lot of time for anything but singing. Furthermore, we still had hardly met one another! The group was comprised of people from all walks of life: those who had sung in NYC before and those who hadn't; high school students, university graduates, music students, engineers, teachers and everything in between. Yet, despite all these differences, the group worked together with an extreme amount of focus, discipline and commitment, which helped to turn the notes on the page into a real living music. At the end of our week of rehearsals, we were ready for our first concert at Truro First United.

From there, we travelled throughout the Maritimes, giving concerts in Halifax, Lunenburg, Saint John, Fredericton, Summerside and, finally, in Sackville at Podium 2008. We had plenty of opportunities along the way to do some sightseeing, including stops at Peggy's Cove, Hopewell Rocks and Charlottetown (where we had dinner with the Honorable Barbara Hagerman, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island). We even had time for a lobster dinner, which was at once incredibly delicious — for those who knew how to dissect a lobster — and incredibly confusing — for the vast majority of choristers who had never seen a lobster, let alone could figure out how to eat one!

NYC was an incredible learning experience. In addition to honing our musicianship, this choir enabled us to make connections and strong friendships with our peers from across the country, bringing an already tightly knit choral community even closer together. On behalf of the four New Brunswick representatives to this year's NYC, I would like to extend thanks to the New Brunswick Choral Federation for its support and encourage all young singers in the province to audition for NYC 2010.

*Shawn Potter, New Brunswick's tenor rep on NYC 2008, is a third-year music student at Mount Allison University, studying organ and harpsichord. NYC 2010 will be held in Saskatchewan, under the direction of Dr. Victoria Meredith; auditions to be held in fall 2009.*

**The New Brunswick Youth Choir  
is accepting applications  
for its inaugural residency**

**May 15-17, 2009  
Mount Allison University**

**Guest Conductor - Scott Leithead**

*For information on the audition process,  
contact [nbcf@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:nbcf@nbnet.nb.ca) 506 453-3731*