

# The Reynolds Chorus – A History

In the year 2000, a few Reynolds Plantation residents who shared a desire to form a singing group conceived of and began the Reynolds Chorus. Jude Martincic, Jean Merritt and Linda Disosway met to get things started and to recruit additional members. On November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2000, the Chorus had its first rehearsal with twenty-one (21) members present. At that time, the name of the group was the “Plantation Singers.” Jean Merritt agreed to direct, and Karen Obee became the accompanist. The group has since become “The Reynolds Chorus” with a membership of forty-nine (49) singers.

The first year (2000), the chorus sang **Christmas Carols at Happy Hour** at both Reynolds Clubhouses and in February 2001, serenaded the “**Sweethearts**” at the **Valentine’s Day** dinner at both clubhouses. In April of that year The Chorus began the tradition of singing at the Lake Oconee Community Church **Easter Sunrise Service** at the Plantation Pointe Pavilion. On 9/11 The Chorus was asked to sing at what originally was to be a Member/Management Meeting at the new Oconee Clubhouse. However, the unexpected events of that tragic day changed everything. Still, Management asked the Chorus to offer patriotic songs which brought the Reynolds Plantation membership together to grieve and sing.

The Chorus has sung for many events on property, at churches, memorial services, nursing homes, holiday celebrations, the ground breaking for the Publix Super Market as well as its opening, the opening of The Lake Club, and many other community events.

From the beginning, The Chorus has presented “musicales.” The first, “**An Evening with Rodgers & Hammerstein,**” occurred at the Great Waters Clubhouse in 2001 celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Richard Rodgers. In 2002 “**A Date With Disney**” marked the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Disney Animated Films. And in 2003, The Chorus performed “**An Oscar Odyssey**” honoring the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Academy Awards.

On November 21, 2004, The Chorus took to the stage in the Grand Ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton Lodge, presenting “**An American Musical Journey**” directed by new Director – Donna Carol Brelsford along with a new accompanist – Amy Reber. The concert was comprised of songs inspired by the wonderful country in which we live. In April, 2005 the Chorus was back at the Great Waters Clubhouse which was transformed into a 1950’s Drive-In for the production “**Fifties Fever.**” On December 4, 2005 The Chorus again was on stage at the Ritz-Carlton Lodge to present “**A Night of Holiday Magic**” including carols, spirituals and fun songs of the season. On November 8, 2006 The Chorus displayed its talent at The Great Waters Clubhouse in “**Broadway - An Evening at the Winter Garden Theatre**”, a revue of Broadway tunes performed at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City. On November 25, 2007 The Chorus mounted another holiday concert “**Christmas Time with the Reynolds Chorus**” at the Ritz.

In 2008 The Chorus moved its annual performance to The Plaza Arts Center (TPAC) in Eatonton for a two-day run in order to accommodate a larger audience, with a mixture of old and new country music for the “**Barn Dance.**” As it does every other year, The Chorus presented their December 2009 Christmas show “**Christmas Traditions**” at the Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation to an audience of 500+.

In 2010 over 800 persons attended the annual concert and “**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Retrospective**” at The Plaza Arts Center, which included music from each of the previous shows. On September 11<sup>th</sup> of 2011 The Chorus performed at Festival Hall in Greensboro with Jeffrey Wells, the OPAS (Oconee Performing Arts Society) Artist In Residence, on loan from the Metropolitan Opera in New York for “**Never Forget: A 9/11 Tribute.**” On December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> the chorus was again at the Plaza Arts Center for a Christmas celebration “**Holy Days & Holidays**” which was enjoyed by 700 guests. The 2012 “**The Reynolds Chorus...IN MOTION,**” was performed at TPAC on October 13<sup>th</sup>. The Chorus just successfully completed its 2014 effort, a program of Love Songs from the 1940’s through the 1990’s titled “**IN LOVE with The Reynolds Chorus.**” This show was performed again at TPAC on February 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> for over 600 guests.