

# **YOUR BRAIN AND SINGING**

## **WHY SINGING IN A CHOIR MAKES YOU HAPPIER**

**This information was compiled by Jaime Babbitt. Her sources are: Stacy Horn-Imperfect Harmony: Finding Happiness While Singing With Others; and Dr. David Huron, a music professor at the Ohio State University where he does research on music cognition and music and emotion.**

**This is a summary of the main points:**

- 1. Singing any type of music releases endorphins, hormones produced by the central nervous system. These hormones interact with opiate receptors in the brain diminishing pain and triggering an almost analgesic feeling in the body.**
- 2. Singing releases dopamine, a chemical that works to help regulate the brain's pleasure and reward centers.**
- 3. Singing has been found to release serotonin, a neurotransmitter found mainly in the digestive tract that helps regulate our moods, social behaviors, and appetite.**
- 4. Music, either singing or listening, can lower cortisol levels.**
- 5. Dr. Huron's research postulates that singing may increase prolactin production which helps regulate the immune system.**
- 6. Musical memories engage broader neural pathways than other types of memories. That is why hearing an old or favorite song can flood one with very specific emotions and visual cues.**
- 7. Doctors have now found that singers have more circuit connections between the right and left sides of their brains than non-singers.**