

New Amsterdam Singers

ANNUAL REPORT

2013–2014



New Amsterdam Singers in rehearsal.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT —

ROBIN BECKHARD

Our 46th season has been notable for both change and constancy. The constancy has been the joy of making music together, and the quality of that music-making, judging by the enthusiastic critical and audience response we received. Clara demonstrated again her uncanny knack for selecting music that challenges and expands our horizons without overwhelming us, fulfilling our mission to “inspire and educate our listeners and ourselves.”

The change is reflected in a number of key positions. Three members of our chorus remain as singers, but have retired from the leadership roles they filled so capably for many years. We thank James Crowell for his professional stewardship as Treasurer, and appreciate the help he is giving Brian Farrell in coming up to speed as our new Treasurer. Hannah Kerwin has been a conscientious and compleat Secretary, a task she now bequeaths to new board member Kate Leahy. (Hannah has graciously agreed to continue overseeing the festive holiday party after our Sunday December concert.) And we are grateful to Lauren Scott for all the years she served so capably as our Manager.

We wish Max Blum all the best as he leaves NAS after three years as our able Assistant Conductor, and also appreciated tenor Nathaniel Granor's inspiring warm-ups at many rehearsals this past season.

Luckily for NAS, our search for a new Manager brought us Rakia Clark, whose enthusiasm, eagerness to learn and great personal warmth have impressed us and endeared her to the chorus in very little time. Rakia immediately began working with the Marketing Committee to try to bring new audience members to our May Shakespeare concert. This “affinity marketing” effort is an example of innovative approaches that the Marketing Committee will continue to experiment with in the coming year. Ellen Stark continued her excellent social media work.

Sincere thanks to Kim Allan and Andy James, both of whom have served as Chairs of the Marketing Committee. With the help of Nate Mickelson, Rakia, Charlotte Levitt and several other singers, Andy oversaw the needs assessment and selection of a new database system called PatronManager. This tool will allow NAS to communicate and interact more effectively with alumni, friends, family, new audience members and all the others who make up the NAS “family.”

The Development Committee, under the able direction of Dennis Goodenough, has also been hard at work this past year to ensure that the chorus can afford to think aspirationally about new commissions and performances with orchestra, among other things. The committee launched a legacy giving campaign at the May concert, and oversaw two successful benefits. In November, Nina Reiniger and Michael Milton produced two performances of the first “NAS Revue” at Don't Tell Mama, an opportunity for 15 NASers new and old to perform solos, duets and group numbers as a “friend raiser” in a relaxed, fun setting. Bob Pietrzak again hosted an elegant dinner and cabaret performance in February. Michael Milton, Nathaniel Granor, Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, Kate Leahy and I enjoyed singing for 85 guests, joined by surprise guest performer Bevis Longstreth. Longtime NASer Ari Brose didn't let a move to Washington, DC prevent her from stepping up and helping to produce this event, as well as offering additional marketing expertise throughout the year. Her help has been greatly appreciated.

For the first time, the Board will hold a retreat in September, with the aim of taking a more strategic view of our roles and the part we play in ensuring the health and longevity of the chorus. Donna Zalichin, Nate Mickelson, Andy James and Bob Pietrzak are helping to plan this session, which will inform the work of the Board throughout the coming year and beyond. I am grateful for their good counsel.

In addition to our board members, who are so generous with their time and creativity, we are lucky to have all the NAS volunteers who take on tasks large and small. This report has given me a chance to thank a few by name – so many others have contributed, and continue to do so. If you are reading this Annual Report, you are a friend of NAS. Thank you for your support!

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT — CLARA LONGSTRETH

The 2013-14 season, NAS's 46th year, has been a terrific one, with happy singers, enthusiastic audiences, and great press. It has also been a hardworking year for our board, and I am enormously grateful for their skill and dedication. They spent lots of time on NAS projects above and beyond singing.

In December, we had the largest audiences ever, and in part this must be due to the fun singers were having with a piece new to us, Conrad Susa's "Carols and Lullabies: Christmas in the Southwest." The Spanish and Catalan carols were lovely, and the piece was especially winning because of the harp, guitar, marimba, and vibraphone accompaniment.

This concert was also a celebration of Benjamin Britten's hundredth birthday, and included "A.M.D.G.," a cycle not often performed, for chamber chorus, and, of course, "A Ceremony of Carols" for women's voices. The men were in rousing voice for Milhaud's "Psaume 121."

In March, we paired Schütz's beloved requiem, the "Musikalische Exequien," with Jaakko Mäntyjärvi's stunning, deeply moving "Canticum Calamitatis Maritimae." The Schütz gave opportunity for chorus members to shine in the many solos and ensembles. In "Canticum Calamitatis Maritimae," our guest soprano, Winnie Nieh, soared and floated in her wordless lament.

In May, we again sang works of the Finnish composer Mäntyjärvi, and enjoyed his "Four Shakespeare Songs," which included glissandos and a stomp along with alluring harmonies. Each piece on the program presented challenges, with the older ones trickier than those more recently composed. The chamber chorus did a superb job with Frank Martin's "Songs of Ariel," full of chromatic passages and fast runs, as well as cock calls and bells.

Anthony Tommasini attended the May concert for the third year in a row and gave us a glowing review for repertoire choices and performances. St. Ignatius Church was packed for this final concert of the year. Perhaps Shakespeare gets credit for that!

Max Blum ended his three-year term as assistant conductor with a flourish. This season, he conducted the men in works of Biebl, Niles, and Washburn, and the full chorus in a lively, meticulously prepared performance of Jeppesen's "Four Shakespeare Songs." In March, he sang fluid sets of intonations in Finnish Latin and German. He has been a valued colleague and friend throughout. Pen Ying Fang was a helpful and friendly presence at the piano in her 14th season as our accompanist.

Turning to chorus management, it has been an eventful year. When Lauren Scott resigned in December, we were glad she would continue to sing and thankful for her many years of professional work for the chorus. The transition and search for a new manager was a big job headed by Donna Zalichin, Robin Beckhard and Nate Mickelson. We were delighted to welcome Rakia Clark as our new manager starting in February.

I thank our president Robin Beckhard for her organizational skill and vision for the future of NAS. I thank vice president Donna Zalichin for heading the long-term Planning Committee, the search committee, and for taking a leading role in tours, both past and future.

Our longtime secretary Hannah Kerwin and treasurer James Crowell are retiring after doing excellent jobs keeping our history and our financial health in order. Scott Gillam is turning over part of the librarian role to Jud Brooks after too many years to count in that demanding job. Relative newcomer Andy James has been invaluable in marketing and research on data management.

Dana Crowell made a summer project of reviewing, choosing, editing and producing a compact disc, which is a "Best of NAS Christmas Music." I was truly delighted to have this evidence of what a wealth of interesting seasonal music we have done over the past years. (Lovely, unusual carols and motets.) It is a disc I would never had had the time or initiative to research myself, but of which I am very proud.

NAS produced two cabaret shows this season. For these, I am in the fortunate position of being a wide-eyed, enthusiastic audience member with no responsibility at all. Nevertheless, I am (perhaps unreasonably) proud, because NAS has attracted such great singers with winning dramatic abilities to match their voices.



TREASURER'S REPORT — JAMES CROWELL



The NAS budget represents a carefully thought-out set of decisions that allow us to remain fiscally responsible while staying true to our mission of inspiring our listeners with innovative programming. We plan some seasons in which expenditures are relatively low to allow for those years in which we hire a larger orchestra of professional players or commission a

new work. The Treasurer is responsible for managing this see-saw effect, and making sure that in the “lean” expense years we reserve some portion of any excess of income over expenses as a provision for those years in which we have significantly higher costs.

The popularity of our December concert pushed overall ticket sales well above expectations for the first time in several years. Two successful fundraisers, a solid year of contributions, and unanticipated income from a new CD of NAS Christmas songs resulted in a record \$123,000 in income. While expenses were higher overall compared to the previous season, they mostly tracked to expectations, and in light of overall fundraising this year, the board was able to set aside \$20,000 for future orchestra and/or commission expenses.

Our NAS endowment currently totals \$215,079 in a mix of stocks, bonds and cash. Its performance over the last year has been in step with the overall investment industry.

Income

	2011-2012	2012-2013
Ticket and Other Performance Income	\$18,965	\$23,805
Dues, Music Library, Cookbook and CD's	\$18,131	\$22,266
Fundraiser	\$18,778	\$8,258
Individual and Corporate Contributions	\$54,173	\$68,683
TOTAL INCOME	\$110,047	\$123,012

Expenses

Personnel	\$44,087	\$43,178
Hired Musicians	\$3,849	\$7,624
Concert, Rehearsal and Music Costs	\$24,518	\$22,419
Advertising and Promotion	\$8,351	\$13,110
Other Operating Expenses	\$8,064	\$7,678
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$88,869	\$94,009

Aggregate Net Surplus/Loss **\$21,178** **\$29,003**

Operating reserve for orchestra or commissions \$18,000 \$20,000

Net Operations Increase **\$3,178** **\$9,002**



New Amsterdam Singers Welcomes New Assistant Musical Director

In May 2014, David Recca completed the coursework and performing requirements for a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and Yale Institute of Sacred Music. His most recent position was Adjunct Professor of Music at Purchase College, State University of New York. There he directed the Purchase College Chorus, founded the Purchase Chamber Singers, and taught a variety of music theory and ear training courses. He holds a master's degree in choral conducting from Eastman School of Music, a performer's certificate in vocal coaching and an undergraduate degree in composition from Purchase College. He was also the director of the Manhattan-based early music ensemble, Madrigalia Via whose sounds were hailed as “sinfully blissful” by the Wall Street Journal. This is his first season as Assistant Music Director with the New Amsterdam Singers.

New York Times Review

Dark Lullabies and Twisted Witches:

*New Amsterdam Singers Bring Shakespeare to Upper West Side.
May 23, 2014.*

By Anthony Tommasini

Putting together a concert of works linked by an overall theme may seem a surefire way to lend coherence to a program. The risk is that in searching for pieces that support a chosen theme, especially unfamiliar scores, you wind up with novelties of lesser musical interest.

That risk has never deterred Clara Longstreth, the longtime music director of the New Amsterdam Singers, the admirable New York chorus founded in 1968. She has a real knack for devising thematic programs of fresh, worthy pieces, the latest being the ensemble's

... a real knack for devising thematic programs of fresh, worthy pieces ...

Thursday night concert at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church on the Upper West Side. Titled "Full Fathom Five: Shakespeare in Song," this lovely program of mostly a cappella works offered both musical delights and insights into the poetry.

Shakespeare in song is hardly an unexplored subject. Still, where else but at a New Amsterdam Singers concert would you have encountered rewarding Shakespeare settings by Jaakko Mantyjärvi, a Finnish composer and teacher born in 1963, and Knud Jeppesen, a Danish musicologist and composer who died in 1974, along with a batch of settings of passages from "The Tempest" by the British giant Ralph Vaughan Williams and the Swiss master Frank Martin? As always, the singing of this choir of nearly 70 voices had warmth, texture and confidence.

"Four Shakespeare Songs," by Mr. Mantyjärvi, is the work of an intelligent craftsman with a feel for Shakespeare's language and sensibilities. His version of "Lul-

laby," from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," was tender, slightly eerie and harmonically alluring. In "Double, Double Toil and Trouble," the magic spell of the witches in "Macbeth," Mr. Mantyjärvi conveyed the weirdness of the imagery (one ingredient in the brew is "finger of birth-strangled babe") through music that evolves in jagged phrases over droning bass riffs, with a hint of medieval harmony.

Vaughan Williams wrote "Three Shakespeare Songs" in 1951 as a test piece for a national choral competition, and the music is quite daring. In "Full-Fathom Five" (one of three settings of this passage from "The Tempest" by different composers performed on this night), Vaughan Williams gives Shakespeare's lines to the deepest voices, above which upper parts sing pinched clusters of notes, whispered effects and evocations of bells.

The New Amsterdam Chamber Chorus, comprising two dozen singers from the ensemble, performed Martin's "Songs of Ariel," mysterious music that conveys the roiling undercurrents of this character, a restless spirit bound in service to the brooding Prospero. Max Blum, the chorus's assistant conductor, led the ensemble very ably in works by Mr. Jeppesen and Robert Washburn.

... piano accompaniment, played delicately by Pen Ying Fang ...

The male voices had their own set of pieces. But the women got an even better opportunity to show off through a beguiling performance of Berlioz's subtly tragic choral song "La Mort d'Ophélie," performed here in a version with piano accompaniment, played delicately by Pen Ying Fang. You know a program is inventive when this Berlioz work is its most familiar item.



NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS
2014-2015
CONCERT SERIES

**BACH, GABRIELI, HARP,
AND BRASS**

-
- J.S. Bach Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied
 - Abbie Betinas And the Song Am I
New York premiere
 - Giovanni Gabrieli Jubilate Deo
 - Jaakko Mäntyjärvi Iubilemus Deo salutari nostro
 - Kirke Mechem Seven Joys of Christmas
 - Daniel Pinkham Christmas Cantata
 - Francis Poulenc Quatre petites prières
de St. François d'Assise
 - Steven Sametz, arranger Irish Lullaby for the Christ
Child
 - Heinrich Schütz O lieber Herre Gott
 - Williametta Spencer Nova, nova, ave fit ex Eva
 - Randall Thompson Sing with the Spirit
from The Garment of Praise

Immanuel Lutheran Church
122 East 88th Street (at Lexington Avenue)
Friday, December 12, 2014 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, December 14, 2014 at 4 p.m.
Reception and caroling following the Sunday Concert.

NEW AMERICAN ROMANTICS

Composers of Our Time on Poems of Frost, Yeats, Agee, Graves, and Hardy.

- Dominick Argento So I'll Sing with My Voice
- Donald Grantham A Valediction *World premiere*
Let Evening Come
New York premiere
- Matthew Harris Three Choruses from Tess
If Music and Sweet Poetry Agree *New York City premiere*
- Morten Lauridsen O Love, Be Fed with Apples
While You May
Sure on This Shining Night
- Elizabeth Lim Prayers for Wind
- Ben Moore The Lake Isle of Innisfree
New York City premiere
- Ronald Perera North Country

The Church of the Holy Trinity
316 East 88th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenues)
Friday, March 6, 2015 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, March 8, 2015 at 4 p.m.

**POEMS, LETTERS,
AND PREMIERES**

Major Works by Dellaira, Effinger, and Whitacre for chorus and winds on poetry of Joyce, Dickinson, Rilke, and stirring letters of van Gogh.

- Leonard Bernstein French Choruses from The Lark
- Michael Dellaira Nobody
New York City premiere
- Cecil Effinger Four Pastorales
- Paul Hindemith Six chansons
- Ben Moore Dear Theo (letters from van Gogh)
New York City premiere
- Francis Poulenc Petites voix
- Eric Whitacre She Weeps Over Ragoon

Saint Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church
554 West End Avenue (at 87th Street)
Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 8 p.m.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Clara Longstreth, Music Director: Clara Longstreth has conducted New Amsterdam Singers since its formation in 1968. She has served on the faculty of Rutgers University, where she conducted the Voorhees Choir of Douglas College. A student of G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard, Ms. Longstreth trained for her Master's degree at the Juilliard School under Richard Westenburg. Further study included work with Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov at the Mannes College of Music and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival.

In 1997 Ms. Longstreth guest-conducted the Limón Dance Company in performances with NAS and the Riverside Church Choir. In 2010 she again conducted the Limón Dance Company at the Skirball Center at NYU. She is a frequent guest conductor at the annual Messiah Sing-In at Avery Fisher Hall and at the summer sings of the West Village Chorale, the New York Choral Society, and other choruses. She has also served as adjudicator of choral festivals, conducted the Riverdale Country School choral groups and conducted the Juilliard Chorus and Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall. In 2006 she presented a lecture-demonstration on "Adventures in Programming" for the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.



Of Ms. Longstreth's programs, Allan Kozinn wrote in the New York Times, "When a director takes up the challenge of building a cohesive program around a broad theme, we are reminded that programming can be an art."



Max Blum, Assistant Music Director: NAS was delighted to have Max Blum return for a third season as Assistant Conductor. As an adjunct Lecturer at Brooklyn College, he also conducts the Brooklyn College Conservatory Singers. Max sings with professional choirs throughout Manhattan, as well as with the Yale Choral Artists, a new chamber ensemble which recently performed in concerts directed by William Christie and Mark Morris. Max completed his Master's in Choral Conducting in 2011 at the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Masaaki Suzuki, Marguerite Brooks, Jeffrey Douma, and many guest artists, and was the Assistant Conductor of the Yale Glee Club, which he led in cathedrals and concert halls throughout Europe.

Pen Ying Fang, Accompanist: Pen Ying Fang was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and began studying piano at age five. She attended an "experimental" music-focused grade school there until later moving to the United States to continue her education. Here she studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning a B.M. and M.M. in Piano at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She has performed around the New York metropolitan area, building up an extensive repertoire of solo and chamber works. Ms. Fang has accompanied the master classes of many prominent artists, including Keith Underwod, Evelyn Glennie, Brian McIntosh and Christopher Arneson. Additionally, she has toured domestically and overseas with various choirs in the New York area, and in 2007 she played at the "Florence Voice Seminar" in Florence, Italy. Currently she serves as a staff accompanist at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., and teaches piano students in the central New Jersey area.



Rakia Clark, Manager: Rakia Clark is beginning her first full season as Manager of NAS, after joining us mid-season earlier in the year. A long-time choir music lover and former first-chair flautist, she has a deep commitment to the arts – performing and literary. Outside of her role as Manager, Rakia works as a book editor and publishing consultant. She has held editorial positions at HarperCollins, Random House and Kensington Publishing Corp.

Rakia has a B.A. in English from Haverford College in Pennsylvania.

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We are grateful for the generous support from our contributors in 2013–2014.

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Robin Beckhard (President) is SVP at Lee Hecht Harrison, a global provider of human capital consulting services and solutions. She has sung with NAS for a cool quarter century.

Donna Zalichin (Vice President) is a consultant to nonprofit organizations, specializing in organizational assessment, leadership transitions, and retreat facilitation.

James Crowell (Treasurer) is a project management consultant with over twenty years of experience in the IT industry.

Hannah Kerwin (Secretary) is the director of a public library in central New Jersey. Her iris photographs were displayed in a solo show this past year.

Philip Holmgren has been a member of New Amsterdam Singers since 1996. He currently sings in Chamber Chorus.

Andy James joined NAS in 2012. He works as the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Whitestone, Queens, and as the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New York City.

Paul Meyers is Vice Chairman of Pediatrics at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Nate Mickelson is Instructor of English at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College and a Ph.D. candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Robert Pietrzak is a litigation partner at the law firm of Sidley Austin LLP.

Nina Reiniger, who has been an NAS alto since 2009 and on the NAS Board since 2012, was trained as a medical research scientist at Harvard University.

Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff is a retired risk manager, jeweler and physician who has sung with NAS for 30 years.

NON-CHORUS BOARD MEMBERS 2013–2014

Kimberly McFarlane Allan is Vice President at Bank of America, MS&O Strategy & Execution.

John Duncan, former NAS chorus member (30+ years), tour and benefit meister, is current board president of another non-profit and is semi-retired as an interior designer.

Dennis Goodenough is the founder of DG3 Consulting, a strategic consulting practice focusing on global payments and post-trade securities processing. Dennis has been affiliated with NAS since 1981 as a singer, benefit organizer and past treasurer.

Amy Harrison, former manager of NAS, is Managing Director of the modern dance company RIOULT Dance NY.

Harriet Levine is a certified holistic health practitioner/coach and consultant, a violinist in several community orchestras and chamber music groups, and also an active member in the Volunteer Council of the NY Philharmonic.

Ann McKinney is enjoying life in northwest Connecticut, serving as secretary of the board of Music Mountain (a summer chamber music festival), teaching cello, working as a hospice volunteer, playing in a bell choir, training and running her dogs in agility, and singing in two choruses.

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