



New Amsterdam Singers

**ANNUAL REPORT
2016 - 2017**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT - BRIAN FARRELL

The 49th Season was a remarkably full one for New Amsterdam Singers. In addition to our usual three-concert schedule, we performed a special Carnegie Hall performance, presented three separate fund-raising benefits, and finished the season with a concert tour of Iceland and Copenhagen!

In November, we joined forces in Carnegie Hall with the Park Avenue Chamber Orchestra, the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, and the West Point Glee Club for a thrilling, sold-out performance of Beethoven's Ninth. For many of us this was our first time singing in the iconic venue, and it was an unforgettable experience. The concert benefitted a local veteran's charity, and a bonus highlight was singing the National Anthem with full orchestral accompaniment, surrounded by the young men and women of West Point.

Our holiday concerts in December were very well attended, and the party following the second performance was a resounding success, organized and decorated once again by Hannah Kerwin and her team of volunteers, and featuring traditional carol singing led by Tim DeWerff. Our March and June concerts also attracted large and enthusiastic audiences, as Clara continued to display her remarkable ability to assemble original and intriguing programs, inspiring chorus members and audiences alike.

In February, we held our first fund-raiser of the year, a cabaret featuring Robin Beckhard, Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, and Kate Leahy in an amusing and skillfully sung program entitled "Birds and The Bees." They were accompanied by one of New York's most sought-after music directors, Paul Gordon Greenwood, and the evening included gourmet food prepared by our resident chefs, John Duncan and Dennis Goodenough, and a highly

successful silent auction. Many thanks to Rick Hibberd for designing and executing the marketing material, and Bob Pietrzak for hosting the event. Not to be outdone, Michael Milton and Jason Hill presented "Our Way" in April at the Triad Theatre, which showcased an astonishing range of music from country western to opera, including hilarious special material written by Mr. Milton. Then in May we held a popular Meet The Composers event, with special guests Matthew Harris, Ronald Perera, and Robert Paterson, whose works we performed a few weeks later in our spring concert. All of these events succeeded with the expert help of our chorus manager, Jay Rollins, and a veritable army of volunteers from within the chorus.

On our tour of Iceland and Copenhagen, we presented three well-received concerts, thanks to a strong group of current chorus members plus several returning alumni. Of course the trip included some amazing sightseeing, but also an unexpected opportunity to increase our fan base at home; some folks from New Jersey overheard us chatting in a restaurant, came to our concert that evening, and then asked to be added to the mailing list for our upcoming season. Done!

Throughout the year, our devoted Board of Directors worked tirelessly to formulate plans for next season... our 50th Anniversary. To celebrate this very special landmark, we've commissioned three new works, one of which will be the centerpiece at each of our concerts. In addition, we will be unveiling our brand new website, a 50th Anniversary Memorial Book, an alumni newsletter, and inviting one and all to a festive Gala Celebration on April 19th. That will be a party you won't want to miss, as we celebrate NAS' past, toast its future, and honor the woman who continues to make it all possible, Clara.



MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT - CLARA LONGSTRETH

The 2016-2017 season has been richly satisfying, and often thrilling. In addition to three subscription concerts, we sang in Carnegie Hall in a joint concert and in late

June a group of 35 singers toured Iceland and Copenhagen.

The fall was a busy time, with rehearsals split between preparations for a November performance and recording of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as well as a December performance of our own repertoire. For the Ninth Symphony we joined the Young New Yorkers Chorus and the West Point Glee Club to sing with the Park Avenue Chamber Symphony at Carnegie Hall under conductor David Bernard. The performance, dedicated to the NYC Department of Veterans Services, was nearly sold out. Jake Runestad's *Dreams of the Fallen*, on a moving poem by Brian Turner, was a fitting companion to Beethoven.

The December concerts took place at a new venue for NAS, the lovely Advent Lutheran Church. The Sunday performance was sold out. The centerpiece was Victoria's *Missa O Magnum Mysterium*, flanked by other Renaissance works of Handl, Byrd and Guerrero. The chamber chorus selections included Bach, Lauridsen, Pinkham, and Whitacre.

The March program, called *Northern Lights: Four Centuries of Spirited Music from Northern Europe* included several composers new to NAS: Homilius (18th Century German), Becker (19th C. German), Ragnarsson (20th C. Icelandic) and Tucapsky (21st century Czech.) A favorite piece was Orban's passionate *Cor Mundum*.

The final subscription concert on June 1 was titled "Life is but a Dream: Poetry and Folk Song inspire American works." This program was notable for one commissioned work (Matt Harris' *Shakespeare Songs Book Seven*), and four premieres, plus

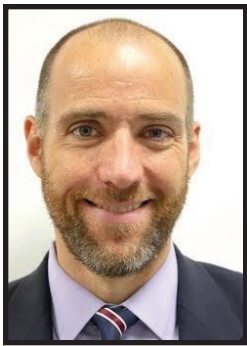
tremendous audience enthusiasm. Among the works I would call "very serious fun" were *O Sapo*, a Brazilian folk song in Portuguese for women and percussion (David Ortiz and Jason Hill) conducted with brio by David Recca. The women also shone in Rindfleisch's *Me! Come! My Dazzled Face!* The men's music ranged from Civil War Songs of simple beauty to Argento's complex *Fata Morgana*.

The final four works were each audience favorites, from *Amazing Grace* and *Father William* (Esenwalds and Fine) to Robert Paterson's fantasia on *Row, Row your boat*, and Matt Harris' beguiling new piece with his signature blend of melodic and rhythmic interest.

In mid June The Chamber Chorus ventured north of NYC to Cold Spring to sing a return engagement at the Restoration Chapel on the Hudson. Cabaret singers filled out the program with a variety of musical comedy tunes.

The 17th NAS overseas tour travelled to Iceland, a first for most of us, and Copenhagen and included a dozen chorus alumni. The lively city scene of Copenhagen was balanced by the spectacular natural beauty and wildness of Iceland. Audiences were in all cases keen on our performances, ranging from sacred music to folk song and spirituals. In Copenhagen we were joined by the excellent group, Tritonus Choir.

We have been delighted to work with David Recca in his third season as our assistant conductor and will welcome him back for a fourth! Pen Ying Fang makes rehearsals go smoothly, and got a chance to show her "chops" in *Father William*. It is a pleasure to work with our dedicated and skilled board, including Brian Farrell as President, Donna Zalichin as Vice president, Nate Mickelson as treasurer and Jason Hill as secretary. Jay Rollins, our long distance manager, was our enthusiastic booster and friend. I thank all these for their gifts of skill and time.



TREASURER'S REPORT - NATE MICKELSON

I am pleased to report that the chorus concluded its 49th season in a strong financial position. With prudent cash management and judicious use of endowment funds

to support special projects, we are poised for an extraordinary 50th Anniversary year. The highlights of the 49th season from a financial perspective were two highly successful benefits and the presentation of a set of Shakespeare Songs commissioned from Matthew Harris, a long-time friend of the chorus and one of our favorite composers.

The first benefit took place in early February. Titled "Birds & Bees," the event featured Valentine's Day-themed cabaret performances by Robin Beckhard, Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, and Kate Leahy and a silent auction. The performance space was donated by board member A. Robert Pietzak and catering was managed by Dennis Goodenough and John Duncan. Michael Milton and Jason Hill joined their talents in a second cabaret benefit, "Our Way," in late April. The pair presented two nights of pop standards and original songs and invited guest appearances by Kate Leahy and David Ortiz. Counting ticket sales, silent auction proceeds, and donations, the events earned net income of more than \$24,000. All proceeds were put to immediate use fund chorus operations.

The chorus's most significant expenses for 2016-2017 were salaries for our Music Director, Manager, Assistant Conductor, and Accompanist. Through the diligent efforts of the board and professional staff, these and all other expenses tracked closely to budget. Income from the spring benefits enabled the chorus to pay for the Harris commission and to purchase music for three other premieres.

Ellen Stark reported on endowment performance at the chorus's annual meeting in June. Per her report, the value of the endowment stands at \$235,082, up

7% from last year. The fund is invested in a mix of stocks, bonds, and cash and managed by a committee comprised of Ellen Stark, Margarita Brose, Dennis Goodenough, Tim DeWerff, and Kate Leahy. The chorus's investment goals are to produce income to support innovative programming and to grow the principal to assure long-term financial stability. The board authorized a withdrawal from the endowment in September 2016 to fund three commissions celebrating the chorus's 50th Anniversary. Based on approved spending guidelines that limit annual withdrawals to a percentage of the value of the fund, the withdrawal was \$8,900.

NAS TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 2016-2017 FISCAL YEAR

ACTUAL INCOME	2015-2016	2016-2017
Ticket sales and other performance income	\$25,418	\$25,515
Dues, Music Library, and CD Sales	\$20,292	\$18,926
Fundraisers	\$22,123	\$24,404
Individual, Corporate, and Foundation Contributions	\$70,806	\$50,661
TOTAL INCOME	\$138,639	\$119,506
ACTUAL EXPENSES		
Personnel	\$54,243	\$50,387
Hired Musicians	\$82,289	--
Concert, Rehearsal and Music Costs	\$23,611	\$31,416
Advertising and Promotion	\$14,364	\$16,645
Other Operating Expenses	\$20,666	\$24,408
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$195,468	\$122,856
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	(\$56,829)	(\$3,350)

It has been a privilege to serve as Treasurer this year. With the conclusion of my third three-year term on the board, I pass these responsibilities to Jason Hill for 2017-2018. I hope you will join him and the rest of the board in making the 50th Anniversary Season our best yet!



NAS TOUR - 2017 ICELAND/COPENHAGEN

IN RETALIATION FOR VIKING RAIDS OF THE 8TH-11TH CENTURIES, A BAND OF INTREPID NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS DESCENDED ON ICELAND IN JULY. HEREWITH A CHRONICLE OF THAT INCURSION, INVOLVING 33 OFFICIAL SINGERS AND 15 IMPORTANT PERSONAGES – FROM CONDUCTOR TO ESSENTIAL SUPPORTERS (LOVINGLY KNOWN AS “GROUPIES”).

Written by Bob Palmer

Photos by Rick Hibberd and David Recca

FRIDAY JUNE 30

The main body of the attack force arrived in Iceland around 6:30 am. Breakfast at the Viking museum was followed by a visit to the merciful and healing waters of the Blue Lagoon. Black and white facial mud-packs vied for pride of place as the ugliest introduction to Iceland, but all was forgiven as muscles relaxed and peace descended. Then on to Reykjavik (smoky bay), the fastest-growing city in Europe. A bus tour of the city included the Hallgrímskirkja Church, based on the hexagonal shape of crystalized lava, of which we were to see many examples.

SATURDAY JULY 1 - THE GOLDEN CIRCLE/SKÁLHOLT CONCERT

Iceland is ringed by waterfalls, the result of glacial run-off plunging over former coastlines. Gullfoss, the double waterfall, is one of the most striking.

Our first concert took place that afternoon at Skálholt Cathedral, a white church situated in green meadows, with magnificent mountains in the background. A church has been on this site for 700 years. Brilliant sunshine belied the traditional Icelandic forecast of clouds, rain, sun, clouds, rain. Our enthusiastic audience was particularly appreciative at our attempts to sing in Icelandic.



SUNDAY JULY 2 - THINGVELLIR AND REYKJAVIK CONCERT

Thingvellir National Park is the site of Althing, the old National Parliament, founded in 930 AD. It sits astride a rift marking the ongoing separation of the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates. Icelanders met there yearly in mid-summer to hear the laws read by the Law Reader atop the Law Rock, to conduct trade and (we were told) foster match-making and other important activities. By way of exterior decorating, they diverted a river to make a pleasant waterfall and provide water for the gathering.

Thingvellir National Park also has an impressive geothermal plant with pipes branching out and carrying hot water and steam to various areas.

Sunday ended with our second concert -- at Domkyrkjan, the Cathedral in Reykjavik. Clara put together an outstanding program of sacred pieces, poetry settings, and folk songs and spirituals – including two songs in Icelandic (yes!) and the always crowd pleasing, house-bringing-down spirituals “Steal Away” and “Ride the Chariot.”

MONDAY JULY 3 - THE SOUTH SHORE

One of the most scenic trips in Iceland runs East along the South shore. Waterfalls are everywhere, as the water flows over the old coast line. The highly photogenic Seljanlandsfoss is a large waterfall you can walk behind (but not without getting wet).

The flat land along the coast is the breadbasket of Iceland. While vegetables do require hot houses, the flat land supports farming, with bales of hay scattered everywhere and herds of sheep very much in evidence.

Lunch was at Skógafoss – a 197-foot (500 step) waterfall fed by the Eyjafjallajökull glacier, home to the volcano that erupted in 2010, disrupting air traffic across the Atlantic.

Lupine was in bloom, and the lavender plants were everywhere. Originally imported to control soil erosion, it seems to be taking over the island, even the most inhospitable places.

We caught views of the Mýrdalsjökull glacier, completely covering Katla, a large volcano that last erupted in 1918, and is now overdue. Sub-glacial eruptions can unleash tremendous floods, with temporary flows exceeding those of the Mississippi river! Our last stop was Dyrhólaey, the black pebble beach with fascinating lava formations (inspiring the aforementioned Hallgrímskirkja Church).

TUESDAY JULY 4 - WHALES AND VIKINGS



Whale watching involved getting encased with bright yellow coveralls and then searching the horizon for signs of the big mammals. We were told we saw 4 different kinds – maybe. But the dolphins were great hosts for the trip, and we marveled at their synchronized swim performance. And those of us on the right side of the boat saw a magnificent display of a humpback whale repeatedly breaching.

Evening saw our Farewell Viking Dinner. Dinner (including tastes of dried fish and fermented shark) was accompanied by a woman beating a skin drum and singing Icelandic songs. But best of all, our own David Recca and Nina Reiniger were formally certified as Viking King and Valkyrie.

THURSDAY JULY 6 – SATURDAY JULY 8 - COPENHAGEN

Two days and three nights in Copenhagen were a great end to our trip, with a whirl of activities, including tours of the city, photo-ops for innumerable beautiful photographs, a Farewell Dinner, and our final concert. Those who remember her will be glad to know that the Little Mermaid is still there - despite a history of two decapitations and one arm amputation!



The Farewell Dinner at Tivoli Gardens featured our traditional serenade by the Groupies, based on Copland's "Simple Gifts." The gift here was one of Gail Duncan's finest librettos – encapsulating the trip, with strict attention to meter and rhyme. Lyrics available on request.

The concert, at St. Ansgar Cathedral, was, fittingly, the musical highlight of the tour. Our host choir, Tritonus, opened the concert with songs by Pärt, Geillo and others, including a remarkable piece for saxophone and chorus by their new conductor, Jacob Høgsbro. After the concert, our hosts feted us in the church garden. They are a group very similar to NAS in age range, amateur status and musical interests. We hope they will come to New York.

As we flew back to JFK via Iceland, we had one last look at the Mýrdalsjökull Glacier, unusually cloud-free, with Katla sleeping quietly beneath.

We arrived home tired but happy; thankful for good fellowship, Clara's superb musical direction, and the hard work of our tour leaders Donna and Nina, which made it all possible.



New Amsterdam Singers

REPERTOIRE FOR 2016-2017

• • • • • O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM • • • • •

CLASSICS AND CAROLS OF THE RENAISSANCE AND TWENTIETH CENTURY

Missa O Magnum Mysterium

Sacerdotes Domini

Pueri, concinite

Qué buen año es del cielo

The Mirthful Heart

Spasenie sodelal

Hallelu!

La virgen lava panales

Brightest and Best

Mirabile Mysterium

O Jesulein Süß

Resonet in Laudibus

Lux Aurumque

Adam lay-y-bounden

Christmas Eve

Thou hast turned my laments into dancing

O Magnum Mysterium

O Magnum Mysterium

Tomas Luis de Victoria

William Byrd

Jacob Handl

Francisco Guerrero

Abbie Betinis

Pavel Chesnokov

Stephen Paulus

traditional Spanish arr Shaw and Parker

Southern Harmony, arr Shawn Kirchner

Jacob Handl

J.S. Bach

Jacob Handl

Eric Whitacre

Howard Skempton

Daniel Pinkham

Daniel Pinkham

Morten Lauridsen

Tomas Luis de Victoria

PROGRAM FOR DECEMBER CONCERTS 2016

• • • • • NORTHERN LIGHTS • • • • •

FOUR CENTURIES OF SPIRITED MUSIC FROM NORTHERN EUROPE

Habe deine Lust an dem Herrn

Denn er hat seinen Engeln befohlen

Kheruvimskaya Pesn

Northern Lights

Tristis est anima mea

Pater mi

Bogoroditse Devo

Mundi Renovatio

Die Lotosblume

Rastlose Liebe

Der Tambour

Ave Maria

Sag mir, Gott

Gram zernagt mein Herzchen

Cor Mundum

Dennoch bleib ich stets an dir

Gottfried August Homilius

Felix Mendelsohn Bartholdy

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Ola Gjeilo

Antonin Tucapsky

Sergei Rachmaninoff

György Orban

Robert Schumann

Hugo Distler

Jozsef Karai

Bohuslav Martinu

György Orban

Gottfried August Homilius

PROGRAM FOR MARCH CONCERTS

• • • • • LIFE IS BUT A DREAM • • • • •

POETRY AND FOLK MELODIES INSPIRE NEW AMERICAN WORKS

World, I Cannot Hold Thee Close Enough

Two Yeats Songs

When you are old

When I was one and twenty

Father William

Amazing Grace

Fata Morgana (from A Harvard Triptych)

Workin' for the dawn of peace

Simple gifts

O Sapo

Me! Come! My Dazzled Face!

When Music Sounds

Shakespeare Songs Book Seven

Life is but a dream

Colin Britt

Ben Moore

Irving Fine

American folk, arr Eriks Esenwalds

Dominick Argento

Civil War Songs, arr Ron Jeffers

Shaker Song, arr Aaron Copland

Brazilian folk, arr Stephen Hatfield

Andrew Rindfleisch

Ronald Perera

Matthew Harris

Robert Paterson

PROGRAM FOR JUNE CONCERTS

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."



David Recca, Assistant Music Director

David Recca, Assistant Music Director: David Recca is currently an Adjunct Professor of Music at the Conservatory of Music of Purchase College, SUNY. There he directs the Purchase College Chorus and Purchase Chamber Singers, he is a conductor of the Purchase Symphony Orchestra, and he teaches a variety of undergraduate courses including music history, music theory, ear training, and conducting. He also directs the Southern Connecticut Camerata, a Norwalk-based early music ensemble celebrating its 60th season.

In May 2014, David completed the coursework and performing requirements for the Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. He holds a Master's degree in Choral Conducting from the Eastman School of Music and a Performer's Certificate in Vocal Coaching and a Bachelor of Music Degree in Composition from Purchase College.

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 she moved 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.



Jay Rollins, Manager

Jay has completed his second season serving as manager. Growing up in a musical household, he went on to receive two degrees in voice performance and enjoy a solo career in opera that allowed him to perform in some of the best houses in the US and Europe.

More recently, he transitioned into a new career. He has more than ten years of experience in various capacities in communications, development, public relations, and marketing roles, with extensive work in more than 20 developing countries. He recently completed a Master of Arts degree in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Additionally, he has traveled extensively and reported around the world. From the border of Syria to the emerging nation of South Sudan, he has been a one-person producer, photographer, reporter, videographer, grip, and editor.

CONTRIBUTORS

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2017

BRIAN FARRELL (President) who had a prior career as an actor, is a real estate broker with Brown Harris Stevens.

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

NATE MICKELSON (Treasurer) is Assistant Professor of English at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College.

JASON HILL (Secretary) is a Commercial Banker with Suffolk County National Bank.

BOARD MEMBERS

ROBIN D. BECKHARD is Director of Client Solutions at Performance of a Lifetime, a consulting firm that helps leaders, teams and organizations grow their business by focusing on the human side of strategy.

ELIZABETH HARDIN , trained as a lawyer, was a professional oboist in Colorado before returning to her native New York.

KATHERINE LEAHY works in international corporate banking and has sung with NAS for over 20 years.

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.

ROBERT H. PALMER is a retired physician.

A. ROBERT PIETRZAK is a litigation partner at the law firm of Sidley Austin LLP.

GWENDOLYN D. SIMMONS is an assistant general counsel and director in the legal department of a major financial institution, and a loyal NAS concertgoer.

BARBARA ZUCKER-PINCHOFF is a retired risk manager, jeweler and physician who has sung with NAS for 30 years.

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