



New Amsterdam Singers *Fiftieth Anniversary*

ANNUAL REPORT

2017 – 2018



Photo by Jennifer Taylor

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BRIAN FARRELL

The 50th Anniversary season of New Amsterdam Singers was a landmark by any standard, but especially remarkable when one considers that our Founder has been Music Director for the entire 50 years. This may qualify as a unique achievement. For context, the world-renowned Robert Shaw Chorale existed intermittently for a mere 17 years! The fact that NAS has lasted this long, and continues to flourish, is due not only to Clara's brilliant programming but also to her gentle and patient authority, which has made this chorus a cherished musical home for members both new and old. I speak for all singers, staff, and alumni when I say: Congratulations Clara, and many thanks for all you have done - and continue to do - to enrich the lives of so many.

A remarkable number of people contributed extra time and resources to make the 50th a memorable season. Foremost among them was alumnus Rick Hibberd, who created an elegant 50th logo, effectively utilized throughout the year. Rick also assembled a stalwart group of volunteers and created the 50th anniversary book, entitled *The First Fifty Years*, a truly magnificent production. Clara was especially pleased with its twelve pages of NAS repertoire, concert by concert. Throughout the season we used full color in our brochure and concert cards, taking advantage of excellent photos recently taken by a professional photographer. And special recognition and gratitude is due alumnus Andy James, who spearheaded and nurtured the creation of our impressive new website. Well done, Andy!

Easily the non-musical highlight of the season was our festive **50th Anniversary Gala**, organized by Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff at the beautiful Fifth Avenue Penthouse. 156 attended, including many alumni from across the country and as far as France and Germany. The evening featured food, dancing to the David Ortiz trio, and video tributes for Clara from many notable musicians. The Gala also celebrated our Anniversary Capital Campaign, expertly led by Donna Zalichin.

Between the March and May concerts board member Orren Alperstein hosted a *Meet the Composers* reception at which Lisa Bielawa and Ben Moore discussed their creative process for the major pieces NAS had commissioned from each of them. Our primary fundraiser was a cabaret performance entitled *The Best of Broadway!*, in which 14 members of the chorus sang for an enthusiastic crowd. As always, an army of volunteers turned out, serving food, setting up the stage, organizing the popular silent auction, and more. Special thanks to Bob Pietrzak for sponsoring the venue.

As they do every year, our board of directors spent untold hours planning and executing many elements which helped make the 50th a season full of unforgettable experiences. Our loyal audience continued to flock to our concerts, and our generous donors continued to support us as we weathered increased costs and multiple other challenges in our determination to ensure the future of New Amsterdam Singers. Thank you all, and we look forward to seeing you during our upcoming season, the 51st!



Brian Farrell (left) and Assistant Conductor David Recca

50th Anniversary Memory

At my first rehearsal, I was immediately impressed by Clara's calm authority, and then by how many people approached to welcome me personally. I volunteered to help at the upcoming Cabaret benefit later that month, observed a great team effort in action, and I knew I'd found a home.

-Brian Farrell

TREASURER'S REPORT

JASON HILL



I am pleased to report that the 50th Anniversary Season of the New Amsterdam Singers was a banner year for the organization in numerous financial respects. NAS exceeded budget in operating performance and continues to be positioned for future success. In addition, the chorus embarked on a three-year capital campaign to raise funds to commission new works, fund concerts requiring ensemble musicians, and ensure the future success of the organization.

In looking at results from ordinary operations, NAS ended the 2017-2018 fiscal year with a small surplus of \$2,155. Income included over \$15,000 in member dues, \$17,000 in ticket sales, and \$19,000 in benefit revenues. The organization raised over \$65,000 in unrestricted current year donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. As part of the 50th anniversary season, NAS also launched a three-year, \$150,000 capital campaign, and raised over \$100,000 towards the goal. In keeping with the spirit of the campaign, a portion of the funds raised was immediately deployed for the commissioning of three new works performed during the anniversary season. The remaining funds will be held by the organization and deployed in accordance with the stated goals of the campaign.

When combined with the highly successful capital campaign, the organization ended the fiscal year with an increase to assets of \$79,039.

NAS Financial Highlights Fiscal Year 2017-2018

	2016-2017	2017-2018
Income		
Ordinary Income:		
Ticket Sales and Performances	\$25,515	\$19,220
Dues, Library, CD Sales	\$18,926	\$17,482
Benefits	\$24,404	\$19,620
Individual, Corporate, and Foundation Contributions	\$50,661	\$65,010
Total Ordinary Income:	\$119,506	\$121,333
Special Income: (*)		
50th Anniversary Campaign Donations		\$107,816
50th Anniversary Gala Donations		\$17,171
Total Special Income:	\$0	\$124,986
Total Income:	\$119,506	\$246,319
Expenses		
Ordinary Expenses:		
Personnel	\$50,387	\$47,345
Concert, Rehearsal, and Music	\$31,416	\$33,988
Advertising & Promotion	\$16,645	\$17,775
Other Operating Expenses	\$24,408	\$20,070
Total Ordinary Expenses:	\$122,856	\$119,178
Special Expenses: (*)		
Commissioned Works		\$23,500
50th Anniversary Gala Expenses		\$24,603
Total Special Expenses:	\$0	\$48,103
Total Expenses:	\$122,856	\$167,280

NET RESULTS FROM ORDINARY OPERATIONS:	-\$3,350	\$2,155
NET RESULTS FROM SPECIAL OPERATIONS: (*)	\$0	\$76,884
NET (DECREASE)/INCREASE:	-\$3,350	\$79,039

(*): Special Income and Expenses represent activities specifically related to the organization's 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign. Funds raised will be used in accordance with the stated goals of the campaign.

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CLARA LONGSTRETH



The 50th season of New Amsterdam Singers can be characterized as one long crescendo to a great climax in June.

The board decided to use the anniversary as a time to commission three new works, one for each concert in 2017-2018. These ranged in length from eight to fourteen minutes and in accompanying forces: string quartet in December, brass trio in March, and piano in May. The texts were especially interesting and each piece was strikingly original.

December: Because Carol Barnett's *The Darkling Thrush* called for string quartet, I also programmed an Argento piece with the same forces, and several Baroque pieces for chorus and strings. We loved the Barnett piece, and the audience appreciated the mixture of periods.

March: Composer Lisa Bielawa, inspired by the chance to work with avocational singers from "all walks of life," chose texts on the act of walking that were wonderfully odd, especially one by Gertrude Stein. This was our first experience with aleatoric music, or music with an element of chance. Those in the audience heard different sounds, depending on where they were sitting. The main group of singers sang from the front, the brass were in the back, until they moved forward, and a group of singers walked while they sang. The audience was intrigued!

May: Full chorus sang an old favorite, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, which we had not sung in

25 years. Matched with that was the third commissioned work of the year, *The Wave Rises* by Ben Moore. Ben was inspired by his lifelong admiration of Virginia Woolf and created a text from many passages of her writings. His music is, as always, full of emotion, and the chorus soared in performances of the lines "And in me, too, the wave rises."

During the intermission of the May concert, Anthony Tommasini of the *New York Times* interviewed me. He wrote a short piece, which was not a review but rather an admiring commentary on our 50th Anniversary.

Jay Rollins completed his third year as manager, two of which were accomplished long distance from his new home in St. Croix. We loved the good cheer he brought to NAS and his heartfelt praise of our music making. (He had been a professional opera singer in an earlier life.) As he retired, we were fortunate to discover the experienced Will Maitland Weiss, who took over as manager in June.

Pen Ying Fang proved her skill at both piano and organ and made light work of many last minute changes in *The Wave Rises* score. When our Assistant Conductor David Recca had a Tuesday night conflict in the spring, Bryan Zaros replaced him for May preparations. David returns in fall, 2018. Both assistants, as well as the Chamber Chorus assistant, Nathaniel Granor, were supremely professional and fun to work with.

I thank all of the singers, the staff, and the board, headed by Brian Farrell, for their extraordinary feats of organization in our 50th year, which generated extra work and fun in equal parts.

The New York Times

A 50-YEAR RUN

Anthony Tommasini

1 June 2018

You think Herbert von Karajan's 35-year reign at Berlin Philharmonic and Eugene Ormandy's 44-year association with the Philadelphia Orchestra were impressive runs? Well, at a concert on Wednesday night [May 30, 2018], Clara Longstreth concluded her 50th season as music director of the 70-member New Amsterdam Singers.

"They haven't tried to get rid of me yet," Ms. Longstreth, who recently turned 80, said in a brief interview during intermission of a characteristically wide-ranging program at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church in Manhattan.

"Singers keep coming because they share the vision," she added. "They want to do Bach and Brahms, but they don't mind doing at least half new music, which is really great."

Indeed, Wednesday's program, which included works by Arvo Pärt and Britten, also offered the premiere of Ben Moore's "The Wave Rises," a harmonically rich work that sets passages from Virginia Woolf's diaries and novels. Ms. Longstreth conducted with undiminished energy and focus.

"If it's fun for me," she said, "it's going to work. And it's still really fun for me."

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS REPERTOIRE for 2017 - 2018

"Sing, Sing Ye Muses" December 8 and December 10, 2017

<i>Sing, Sing Ye Muses</i>	John Blow
<i>Duo Seraphim</i>	Jacob Handl
<i>Beatus Vir</i>	Claudio Monteverdi
<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
<i>Rejoice in the Lord Alway</i>	Henry Purcell
<i>Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem</i>	Henry Purcell
<i>The Vision</i>	Dominick Argento
<i>Befiehl dem Engel, dass er Komm</i>	Dietrich Buxtehude
<i>At a Window</i>	Abbie Betinis
<i>The Darkling Thrush*</i>	Carol Barnett
<i>An Irish Blessing</i>	Andrew Rindfleisch
<i>Break Forth, O beauteous, heavenly light</i>	J. S. Bach

"Hymn to the Dawn" March 9 and March 11, 2018

<i>Agnus Dei</i>	György Orbán
<i>De Profundis</i>	Per Gunnar Petersson
<i>Hymn to the Dawn</i>	Gustav Holst
<i>Evil Shall Not Prevail</i>	Wallingford Riegger
<i>The Creation</i>	Willy Richter
<i>The Old Superb</i>	Charles Villiers Stanford
<i>Daemon Irrebit Calidus</i>	György Orbán
<i>O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf</i>	Hugo Distler
<i>Sicut Cervus</i>	Nancy Wertsch
<i>Hope and Love</i>	Carson Cooman
<i>Salmo de Alabanza</i>	Andrew Rindfleisch
<i>Walks of Life*</i>	Lisa Bielawa
<i>Solfegging</i>	Morton Gould

"Rejoice in the Lamb" May 30, 2018

<i>Nunc dimittis</i>	Arvo Pärt
<i>Concord; Time and Concord</i>	Benjamin Britten
<i>Green Broom</i>	Benjamin Britten
<i>I See; Do You Believe?</i>	Robert S. Cohen
<i>The Wave Rises*</i>	Ben Moore
<i>Rejoice in the Lamb</i>	Benjamin Britten
<i>Hark, I hear the Harps Eternal</i>	traditional, arr. Alice Parker
<i>Unclouded Day</i>	Rev. J.K. Alwood, arr. Shawn Kirchner

* World Premiere, Commissioned by New Amsterdam Singers

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIES

Photos by Steve Remich

Orren Alperstein

I will never forget the cigar factory [on tour in Cuba]; to this day it brings tears to my eyes. I was familiar with the tradition of a lector reading to the workers while they worked, and eager to experience this tradition first hand. On the rolling floor, men and women sat at long tables, working at a furious pace, while they listened with great focus to the lector on a stage at the front of the room. When the forewoman learned we were a chorus from the United States, we were invited up to the stage. We sang two American spirituals and when we finished we received a very enthusiastic standing ovation from everyone in the rolling room. They were obviously deeply moved. An unforgettable cross-cultural moment.

Walter Daum

We were singing the Bach motet *Komm, Jesu, Komm*. My father then was 95 years old; he was weak and ailing, no longer enjoying life. He told us he would welcome a peaceful death. As we sang, I heard the words as "Come, Death, Come... my strength is failing... I long for peace." It was as if Bach's music, with its eternally turning harmonies, was speaking for him.

Vera Sziklai

Clara created a program, "Passion and Protest," with music of Eastern Europe. I lived my whole childhood singing in chorus, always some songs from Liszt, Kodály, and Bartók, but I never dreamt to sing them again in the United States. When Clara asked me if I would be willing to coach the chorus, of course I said yes with excitement. I was touched by the dedication and interest by all members, working to learn the Hungarian texts. My friends came and loved the music and the pronunciation. Those songs are my foundation, my love of music, and my love



Donna Zalichin, Clara Longstreth



Elizabeth Hardin



Longstreth table #1



Hannah Kerwin



Lucy Kraus (left), Rose Guthman

of singing forever - to revisit them and share it with the chorus and our audience meant the world.

Nina Reiniger

It's more than singing in a choir once a week and having some performances. I've performed at Obama's White House. I've sung Beethoven's *Ninth* at Carnegie Hall. I've had a chance to sing as part of a close harmony group for a benefit and go caroling both at the Dakota and for Legal Aid Society families. With the friends I've met in NAS, I've learned the mythology of the Minotaur of Crete, I've visited the prison cell of Nelson Mandela, and I've straddled the continental divide in Iceland. Throughout, I've shared in the wonderfully rich musical choices made by Clara, which have exposed me to many contemporary composers and furthered my education of choral music. I wouldn't trade this experience for the world.

Gabi Barton

My favorite piece stands out easily: the NY premiere of *Dear Theo* by Ben Moore with texts drawn from letters between Vincent Van Gogh and his brother Theo. The

music is highly evocative of Van Gogh's paintings and successfully takes the singers and audience on a journey through the emotional ups and downs throughout the artist's life. Learning this gorgeous, challenging piece in the hope of delivering the most technically perfect as well as the most emotionally unrestrained performance for our audience was one of the most gratifying experiences in my 17 years as a choral singer.

Ari Brose

I had sung with choral groups at Columbia and Barnard, and came from a family of singers. It wasn't a matter of whether I would continue singing after college, it was with whom! Clara's programming was perfect. It didn't take

long for me to learn that there was a group of folks heading out for beers and dinner after rehearsal, and it was these get-togethers, and participation in fundraisers, that led to life-long friendships.

Rick Hibberd

Bruce Lieberman, one of a long, capable line of Assistant Conductors, was also the conductor of the Russian Men's Choir in New York. Rehearsing a piece of Tchaikovsky, he told us something that served me embarrassingly well in three years living in Moscow: "Russian is a language of potatoes and lemons," he lectured. "Speak like a mouthful of potatoes for the dark vowels, as in '*gospodi*,' and like a mouthful of lemons for the bright words like '*dyevstvyenistsa*.'" Armed with Bruce's advice, I could pronounce Russian much better than my pathetic vocabulary would suggest, always eliciting a torrent of conversation I couldn't understand.

Frayda Pitkowsky

Every concert is special; but in this year that marks the 50th anniversary of NAS and the 100th anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth, there's one concert that for me stands out: the performances of the Mahler *Second* at Avery Fisher Hall with the NY Philharmonic, with Bernstein conducting. The chorus got into its places, the musicians took their seats and the maestro walked onto the stage... it still makes me smile to think about it.

Scott Gillam

Sometime in the early 1970s, we sang in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade. Unfortunately, it rained that day. As we huddled in a grandstand opposite the store at 34th Street, we were protected only by store-provided raincoats and given small flashlights to follow the music as best we could. Despite the colorful floats and the efforts of Metropolitan Opera soloist Robert Merrill to keep the focus on the music, it is the weather that I remember best. Singing during the intermission of



Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, Barry Pinchoff

the Three Tenors concert at Giants Stadium was a surprisingly heady experience for me. Forget the fact that we were just providing background sound. The general ambiance of the occasion made the difference. Soft breezes wafted throughout the stands where we sat, and occasional glimpses of VIPs sitting in the first row enhanced the floating feeling.

Mike Milton

Having the opportunity to sing Christmas carols at the Obama White House was a real highlight. I had never taken the tour and our escorts couldn't have been nicer, showing us around before we got set up to sing. I had a small solo in one of the carols and I was so revved up that I switched from pianissimo to triple forte. The ever diplomatic Clara arched an eyebrow in my direction; I calmed down quickly.

Ann McKinney

My favorite NAS vignette is from the South Africa Tour. We had just come from a visit to Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was imprisoned), and were going to the top of Table Mountain. Almost all the singers were in one funicular, with just



Longstreth table #2

a few non-NASers. Someone started one of our standard Tour repertoire spirituals, *Ride the Chariot*. Everyone joined in with great energy, and we sang the whole thing from memory, including the soaring high bits at the end on the ride up. They could probably hear us in Capetown. The eyes of the young man driving the funicular almost fell out of his head, and the guests applauded wildly at the end - as did we! Such fun!

Gloria Winograd

What I've learned from Clara is part of my daily teaching. NAS, full of challenging and eclectic music; not just the usual. I will always cherish the years of spirit-tingling singing and the chance to go on amazing tours. NAS is a human organ, finely tuned, with magnificently blended voices of the dearest, most precious people. Forever in my heart. Forever grateful.



Paul Parsekian, Orren Alperstein

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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 Douglass 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 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 2018, Recca received his Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the Yale School of 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.

Bryan Zaros, Assistant Music Director

Bryan Zaros is the Associate Choirmaster at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, and made his conducting debut with the cathedral choirs at Westminster Abbey, London. He is also the Music Director of the Pro Arte Chorale.

Zaros has conducted concerts at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, and at American Choral Directors Association conferences. He is a recipient of several conducting awards, including an American Prize in conducting. A native New Yorker, Zaros received a Bachelor of Music in Sacred Works from Westminster Choir College, a Master of Music in Conducting from the University of Michigan, and he is currently a candidate for a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting at the Manhattan School of Music.

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 Underwood, 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, and teaches piano students in the central New Jersey area.

Jay Rollins, Will Maitland Weiss, Managers

In May, 2018, Rollins completed his third season as Manager. With more than ten years' experience in communications, development, public relations, and marketing roles, and a Master's degree in Journalism and Communications, he has worked extensively in more than 20 developing countries. With the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), he was responsible for the brand and messaging of an organization with a staff of almost 300 in more than 80 countries.

In June, 2018, Will Maitland Weiss joined the New Amsterdam Singers as its Manager. Weiss has had adjunct or guest teaching positions with a number of universities, and currently teaches a course in nonprofit management for St. Lawrence University's semester-in-NYC program. He is a former managing director/executive director of the American Stage Festival, CSC Repertory Theater, the Arts & Business Council of NY, and the Big Apple Circus, and he currently represents an Adirondack environmental organization, The Wild Center, in New York City.

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

Sopranos

Orren Alperstein
Judith Ballan
Robin Beckhard
Catharine Bishop
Jayanthi Bunyan*
Darlene Challberg
Laura Cohen**
Dana Crowell**
Susan Daum
Katey Dolezal
Holly Fisher*
Rachel Georges
Lauren Goff*
Borbola Gorog
Lindsey Graham**
Rebecca Harris
Laura Klein
Abigail Kniffin
Alyssa LaFosse
Katherine Leahy**
Jaime Leifer**
Katherine Massinger
Andrea Olejar*
Judith Pott*
Mary Lou Russell
Clara Ines Schuhmacher*
Bernardica Sculac-Stern
Elspeth Strang
Jennifer Trahan
Laure Wassen

Altos

Gabriella Barton*
Elizabeth Basile**
Cynthia Brome
Joanne Hubbard Cossa**
Rebecca Dee*
Stephanie Golob
Pamela Haft
Elizabeth Hardin
Sally Hoskins
Hannah Kerwin
Lucy Kraus
Eleanor Kulleseid
Ann McKinney
Nayantara Mukherji
Nina Reiniger
Charlotte Rocker*
Leila Sesmero
Gabriella Simmons
Ellen Stark*
Vera Sziklai
Berenice Thompson
Donna Zalichin
Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff

Tenors

Paul Blanchard
Vincent Cloyd Exito
Dennis Goodenough
Nathaniel Granor**
James Gregory
Nicandro Iannacci
Robert Marlowe
Nate Mickelson
David Moroney**
Paul Parsekian
Robert Pietrzak
John Pinegar
Frayda Pitkowsky
Adam Poole
Timothy H. Sachs**
Taylor Simmons
William A. Simpson
Robert Thorpe*
Hsin Wang
Scott Wilson
Bryan Zaros

Basses

Richard Abel
Bendix Anderson
Michael Berger
Joseph Brooks
Walter Daum
Timothy DeWerff**
Jethro Eisenstein
Eli Enenbach**
Brian Farrell
Scott Gillam
Rick Hibberd
Jason Hill*
Philip Holmgren**
Steve Holtje*
Michael Landy*
John Leuenhagen
Michael Milton
David Ortiz*
Robert Palmer
Mondy Raibon
David Recca
Michael Zimmerman

* Chamber Chorus

** Chamber Chorus only

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Back Row, left to right: Judith Pott, Timothy DeWerff, Nate Mickelson, Andy James, Brian Farrell (*current president*)
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 James Crowell, Dana Boocock Crowell, Ellen Stark

New Amsterdam Singers

Clara Longstreth, Music Director

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 New York, NY 10025
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