



# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

2021 - 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

# MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT



*Clara Longstreth*

In our first season back post pandemic, we were excited to be able to sing together, but it was not a normal experience. We might characterize the situation as a triumph over adversity: the masks, the necessity of learning music while we sat at a fair distance from each other, and the absence of breaks with snacks and juice. While chorus membership was down about a third, we had 8 new singers.

The December 2021 concert featured the long postponed performance of Robert Paterson's "I Go Among Trees," commissioned with the help of Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff and Barry Pinchoff. It was gratifying to hear the work with marimba, and exciting to experience the sophisticated phrasing and sheer dexterity of Makoto Nakura. The women sang Persichetti's "Winter Cantata," with flute and marimba, and the men sang Poulenc's "Quatre Petites Prières de St. François d'Assise." This concert was also the first chance to experience the fruits of my year of research into music of Black composers. We found the works of Uzee Brown, Rosephanye Powell, and John Work tuneful and lively.

The highlight of the March concerts was the beautiful singing of our guest soprano, Sonya Headlam, in Copland's "In the Beginning." With her warm tone and accuracy of pitch, she also showed a personal, committed understanding of the text. Another highlight of the concert was the presence of NAS alumna Tara Mack, who came from London to hear NAS sing her "Harlem Night Song." We enjoyed her piece enormously. An audience favorite was Dale Trumbore's "In the Beginning" on a touching poem about mid life experience. I was proud that the chorus mastered the complex counterpoint and challenging rhythms of works by Adolphus Hailstork and Andrew Rindfleisch. Our accompanist, Pen Ying Fang, shone in the bravura piano part in Ron Perera's setting of ee cummings' poem, "as freedom is a breakfast food."

In May we had a totally successful first collaboration with the Harlem Chamber Players, who joined the chorus for Philip Lasser's beautiful "The Dream Keeper" in its New York premiere. The chorus also sang seven works by Black composers, and the string quartet from the Harlem Chamber Players played William Grant Still's "Lyric Quartette."

Throughout the season David Recca was a source of support and inspiration as well as a conductor of uncommon gifts. After eight years as our Assistant Conductor, he is moving on to other conducting roles in the New York Area.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



*Donna W. Zalichin*

After a year and a half in which we could not sing together in person, the excitement at our first rehearsal in September 2021 was palpable, despite the many accommodations necessary to keep Covid-19 from spreading through our ranks. We greeted old friends and welcomed new ones and quickly got back into the swing of things by warming up our rusty pipes. We deployed powerful air purifiers, kept windows open, and rehearsed in the more spacious (and higher ceilinged) sanctuary. Masks, of course, were de rigueur. We gave up our traditional group snack at break, but slipped outside on all but the most inclement Tuesdays. And to help those isolating at home learn the music, the dedicated and talented Leslie Ching livestreamed our rehearsals. The extensive protocols developed by the Health Committee provided a framework for singing together safely, and everyone's willingness to comply with guidelines concerning exposure, testing, and quarantining helped us get through the season without any transmission within the chorus. Bravi Tutti!

As Clara has written in her report, our concerts were exciting and musically rewarding. And our decision to livestream them was greeted enthusiastically by friends near and far who would otherwise not have been able to attend an in-person performance. Our tech team helped ensure that the listening and viewing experience, while not quite the same as being "in the room where it happened," provided a highly satisfying way of experiencing the performances.

As I write this (July, 2022), yet another sub-variant has taken hold, and Covid cases are again on the upswing. But the efficacy of vaccines and boosters is clear, and most cases are milder than those in the early days of the pandemic. We don't know what the future will bring, but we've established that, with appropriate safeguards in place, we can continue to make music together – and that's what NAS is all about!

Thank you to all—singers, musical staff, volunteers, and loyal audience members—who helped make the 2021-22 season such a success!

*Watch from anywhere! In 2021-2022, we began to Live Stream our concerts, inviting fans near and far to watch and listen, to great success! We'll live stream our concerts moving forward, as it allows us to share our music with an increasingly diverse audience.*

# TREASURER'S REPORT

*Orren Alperstein*



New Amsterdam Singers is in a strong financial position, in spite of the continuing difficulties caused by the pandemic, and the resulting reluctance of some singers and audience members to return to singing and attending concerts in person. The good news is that we do not have a shortfall and are finishing the year in an unanticipated break even position.

The reasons for this positive situation are various:

- Unanticipated gifts in memory of Jessie Palmer, a longtime, cherished supporter of the chorus, and wife of bass, Robert Palmer;
- Continued strong donations by loyal NAS supporters to the Annual Fund;
- Benefit income exceeded budget;
- Strong and growing ticket sales for "streamed" performances that make up for diminished live-ticket sales;
- Funds from a private gift (approximately \$10,000) offset unanticipated Covid-related expenses, like air purifiers, rapid tests, alternative/expanded rehearsal space, and rehearsal/performance recording costs;
- Payment for the commission of a new work by Dale Trumbore, now scheduled for its premiere in spring 2023, will be completed in FY2023, not in FY2022 as expected.

## ASSETS AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

General Operating Funds	\$108,577
50th Anniversary Campaign Fund	\$71,742
Private Gift Fund	\$23,137
Endowment*	\$264,877
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$468,333</b>

\*Value of the endowment rose by \$30,000 in the first half of the fiscal year, but dropped by \$60,000 in the second half.

	2020-2021	2021-2022
<b>GENERAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>		
Ticket Sales and Performances	\$600	\$23,211
Dues; CD Sales	\$7,957	\$11,753
Contributions:		
Events	\$0	\$16,445
Individual, Corporate, and Foundation Contributions	\$66,807	\$77,871
<b>Total General Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$75,364</b>	<b>\$129,280</b>
<b>GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Personnel	\$31,900	\$65,242
Concert, Rehearsal, and Music	\$4,339	\$21,791
Promotion & Development	\$8,799	\$11,877
Other Operating Expenses	\$4,330	\$10,348
<b>Total General Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$52,678</b>	<b>\$116,447</b>
<b>NET FROM GENERAL OPERATIONS</b>	<b>\$22,686</b>	<b>\$12,833</b>
<b>SPECIAL ACTIVITY INCOME</b>		
50th Anniversary Campaign Donations	\$525	\$0
Private Gift Transfer	\$7,500	\$9,258
<b>SPECIAL ACTIVITY EXPENSES</b>		
Commissioned Works	\$13,500	\$0
Guest Artists	\$0	\$17,445
Covid-Related Expenses	\$0	\$9,720
<b>Total Special Activities Expenses</b>	<b>\$13,500</b>	<b>\$27,165</b>
<b>NET FROM SPECIAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>(\$5,475)</b>	<b>(\$17,907)</b>
<b>ENDOWMENT EARNINGS TRANSFER</b>	<b>\$9,800</b>	<b>\$10,640</b>
<b>NET TOTAL (DECREASE)/INCREASE:</b>	<b>\$27,011</b>	<b>\$5,566</b>

## The Return of Song

*Friday December 10, 2021 and Sunday December 12, 2021*

*Live stream Monday December 13, 2021*

This concert featured the world premiere of the New Amsterdam Singers commission "I Go Among Trees" by Robert Paterson, with guest marimbist Makoto Nakura. Paterson chose splendid texts for this 15-minute work: the title poem by renowned poet and nature lover Wendell Berry, May Sarton's wry take on the cold weather in New England, and John Freeman's fast-moving, colorful ode to the kestrel. The marimba is a brilliant instrument evoking flight.

*I Go Among Trees – Robert Paterson*

*World premiere, commissioned by New Amsterdam Singers*

*We Will Stand Up – Karen Siegel*

*Winter Cantata – Vincent Persichetti*

*The Word Was God – Rosephanye Powell*

*Deus in Adjutorium Meum – Benjamin Britten*

*O Radiant Dawn – James MacMillan*

*Wake me up, Lord – Uzee Brown*

*Newborn – John Wesley Work III*

*Quatres petites prières de Saint François d'Assise – Francis Poulenc*



*Clara Longstreth with Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff, guest marimbist Makoto Nakura, and Robert Paterson, who composed "I Go Among Trees."*



## American Voices, Classic and New

*Friday March 18, 2022 and Sunday March 20, 2021 (live streamed and in person)*

This program of American music was a combination of old favorites and new pieces, including Copland's "In the Beginning," with Sonya Headlam, soprano, and the NYC premiere of "Harlem Night Song," by Tara Mack—a New Amsterdam Singers alumna!

*In the Beginning – Aaron Copland*

*In the Middle – Dale Trumbore*

*as freedom is a breakfast food – Ronald Perera*

*When Storms Arise – Adolphus Hailstork*

*Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee – Undine Smith Moore*

*Harlem Night Song – Tara Mack*

*New York City premiere*

*Reincarnations – Samuel Barber*

*Careless Carols – Andrew Rindfleisch*

[Watch Clara Longstreth talk about the concert program.](#)

[Watch chorus member Ellen Stark speak with composer Tara Mack about her composition, "Harlem Night Song."](#)



*Soprano Sonya Headlam with Clara Longstreth*



*Clara Longstreth with composer Tara Mack*

## The Dream Keeper

*Friday May 22, 2022 and Thursday May 26, 2021 (live streamed and in person)*

For our last concert of the season, we were joined by The Harlem Chamber Players for the New York premiere of 'The Dream Keeper' by Philip Lasser. Composed in 2006, the work for chorus and eight instruments sets poetry by Langston Hughes. In describing his choice of Hughes' poetry for what he calls a "Secular Cantata," Lasser says, "the wonderful fluidity and subtle flow of his words inspired me to bring into actual melody the music I believe is already embedded in the poems."

*The Dream Keeper – Philip Lasser*

*New York City premiere*

*Arise my Beloved – Adolphus Hailstork*

*Sicut Cervus – Rosephanye Powell*

*O Praise the Lord – Adolphus Hailstork*

*The Lee Shore – Samuel Coleridge-Taylor*

*We Shall Walk Through the Valley in Peace – Undine Smith Moore*

*O Praise the Lord – Ulysses Kay*

*Going Home – Hale Smith*

*Lyric Quartette – William Grant Still*

[Watch "The Dream Keeper" composer Philip Lasser talk about why he chose to set poems by Langston Hughes.](#)



*Clara Longstreth pictured here with Ashley Horne, concert master of The Harlem Chamber Players, and composer Philip Lasser.*



## **CLARA LONGSTRETH, Music Director**

is the founder and Music Director of New Amsterdam Singers and has led the group for its past 53 seasons. Under her direction, NAS has become known as one of the premier avocational choruses in New York City. 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." And in June, 2018, Times critic Anthony Tommasini wrote, "You think von Karajan's 35-year reign at the 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....Ms. Longstreth conducted with undiminished energy and focus."

Ms. Longstreth studied conducting with G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard University and with Richard Westenburg at The Juilliard School, from which she received her Master's Degree. She also studied with Amy Kaiser and Semyon Bychkov at the Mannes College of Music, and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival. Ms. Longstreth has been a frequent adjudicator at choral conferences, and was selected to present a lecture-demonstration on "Adventures in Programming" at the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2009 she received an Alumnae Recognition Award from Radcliffe College for her founding and longtime direction of New Amsterdam Singers. Ms. Longstreth has also served on the faculty of Rutgers University, and as a guest conductor of

the Limón Dance Company, the Mannes College Orchestra, and the popular Messiah Sing-In performances at Avery Fisher Hall. She has led the chorus on 17 international tours.

## **DAVID RECCA, Assistant Conductor**

is a lecturer at the Conservatory of Music at Purchase College, SUNY, where he directs the Purchase Chorus and Purchase Chamber Singers; is a frequent guest conductor of the Purchase Symphony Orchestra; and teaches a variety of undergraduate courses including music history, music theory, ear training, and conducting. He is the newly appointed Artistic Director of the New York City Master Chorale. He is also the Artistic Director of the Southern Connecticut Camerata, and the Assistant Music Director of New Amsterdam Singers. He has served as assistant conductor to Mercury Opera Rochester, principal assistant conductor to the Yale Camerata, and artistic director to Madrigalia Via, whose performances were hailed as "sinfully blissful" by the Wall Street Journal. He has prepared choirs for conductors such as Helmuth Rilling, David Hill, Masaaki Suzuki, Simon Carrington, Erwin Ortner, and Sir Gilbert Levine. He holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the Yale School of Music, a Master of Music 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 has performed widely in the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas, building an extensive repertoire of solo and chamber music. Currently, she serves as a coach and accompanist at Westminster Choir



College, where she has worked with many prominent artists and renowned voice programs such as the CoOPERative summer program and the Florence Voice Seminar in Italy. As an accompanist she has also performed and toured with several choirs from the New York area, in which capacity The New York Times has praised her performances as "vivid" and "deft." In 2018 Pen Ying was honored to be a featured performer in a Philip Glass opera workshop in North Adams, MA.

Pen Ying is a native of Taiwan, where she began studying piano at age 5. There she attended an experimental music-focused grade school until moving to the United States. Here she studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning a BM and MM in Piano at Rutgers University.

## **WILL MAITLAND WEISS, Manager**

Will Maitland Weiss joined New Amsterdam Singers as its Manager at the start of the 2018-2019 season. He is an adjunct professor for St. Lawrence University, teaching a course on entrepreneurship and nonprofit management in their semester-in-New York City program; he has also had guest teaching positions with the Brooklyn College graduate program in arts administration, Brown, CUNY/Baruch, NYU, Seton Hall, and the University of the Virgin Islands. Mr. Weiss is a former executive director of the American Stage Festival, CSC Repertory Theater, the Arts & Business Council of NY, and the Big Apple Circus.

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*In December 2021, chorus members joined forces to bake cookies for concert goers in lieu of our traditional holiday reception.*



## PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP | 2021-2022

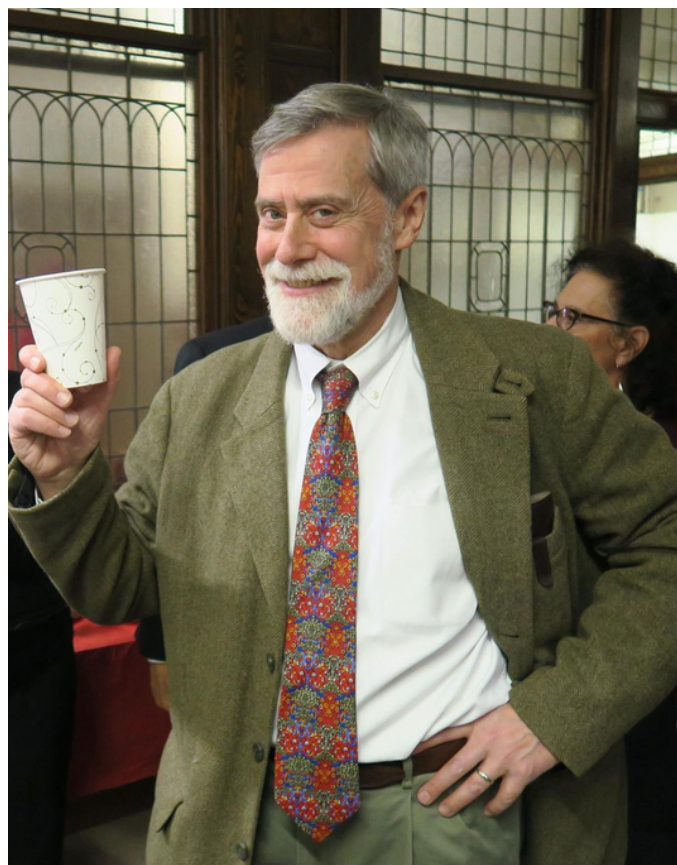


The end of our 2021-22 season marked the end of the tenures of two valued members of the New Amsterdam Singers community. After a record-breaking eight seasons as our assistant conductor, David Recca is moving on to other musical endeavors, including leadership of the New York City Master Chorale, Southern Connecticut Camerata and more. During his years with the New Amsterdam Singers, David has been a true partner to music director Clara Longstreth, and we'll all miss his good humor, fine musicality, incisive teaching, and deep knowledge of choral music. He's been a great friend.

Will Maitland Weiss, our steadfast manager for the past four years, also left at the end of the season, in his case for a well-deserved retirement. Will has been an invaluable member of our small staff, especially during the difficult period of the Covid-19 pandemic. He's brought an unmatched professionalism to the job, not to mention an infectious enthusiasm. We wish David and Will well.



*David Recca with Clara Longstreth*



*Will Maitland Weiss*

# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS | 2021-2022



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# ANNUAL FUND DONORS | 2021-2022



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Arise, My Beloved (Adolphus Hailstork)



O Praise the Lord (Adolphus Hailstork)



The Lee Shore (Samuel Coleridge-Taylor)



Harlem Night Song (Tara Mack) – U.S. Premiere



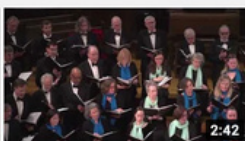
Quatre petites prières de Saint François d'Assise...



Careless Carols (Andrew Rindfleisch)



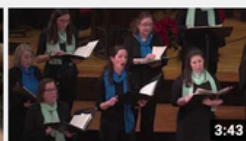
Lord, We Give Thanks to Thee (Undine Smith Moore)



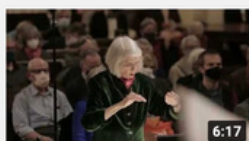
We Will Stand Up (Karen Siegel)



O Radiant Dawn (James MacMillan)



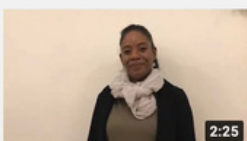
Newborn (by John Wesley Work III)



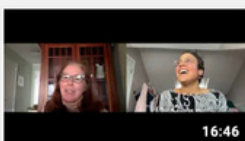
Deus in adjutorium meum (Benjamin Britten)



Interview with Philip Lasser on "The Dream Keeper"...



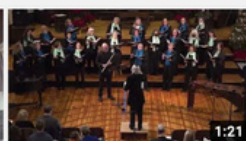
Interview with soprano Sonya Headlam



Meet the Composer: Tara Mack



New Amsterdam Singers music director Clara...



Winter Cantata: One Umbrella

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