

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

2025 - 2026

ANNUAL REPORT



MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ben Arendsen



Our 2025-2026 season was one of obvious great change, and great success. It was my absolute pleasure to take the podium for my inaugural season with the group. I believe we represented the best of what NAS has traditionally excelled at as an ensemble through our three concert cycles.

In December's Leonardo's Workshop, we celebrated works by composers new and traditional inspired by the Renaissance master, Leonardo da Vinci. Particular highlights included the full Chorus' "Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine" by Eric Whitacre, Chamber Chorus' "Wondrous Glow" by Mari Esabel Valverde, and the use of visuals and animations during the performance. My goal in programming for this concert was to show a variety of styles all inspired by the same source. It also served as a great way for me and the ensemble to get to know each other.

March's Leipzig Connections concerts were an exploration of more traditional repertoire, all centered around the city that Johann Sebastian Bach and many other celebrated composers called home. Central to this concert was Bach's "Jesu, Meine Freude," a work the group had previously sung a few years back. The piece was not only a great artistic exploration for the chorus, audience, and myself, but an acknowledgement of NAS' programming history and a way to further deepen my understanding of the group's musical and singing traditions. Singing in a lowered pitch to match Baroque practices at the time was an interesting experiment, and while I don't regret the attempt, I also don't foresee a repeat of that experiment.

Our May A Gift To Be Free performances consisted of repertoire written entirely by living composers, and provided the opportunity to both celebrate and call into question the concept of freedom in the United States as we approached the 250th anniversary of its founding. Our performance of Caroline Shaw's "To the Hands," which was delivered with great artistry and passion from our singers and featured a string quintet of truly spectacular players, was a major highlight of the year, and one to which our audience seemed to respond quite positively! Chamber Chorus' performance of David Lang's "if I am silent" was a testament to the hard work and dedication the ensemble put in all year, showcasing their commitment to taking on challenging works and performing them at a high level.

The 2025-2026 season was also the last with our terrific Assistant Conductor, T.J. Barnes, whose energy, enthusiasm and skill in direction and singing was a genuine asset to the chorus. I have a great deal of confidence that we will see bigger and better things from T.J. in the future, and it was a pleasure to work with him! The continued presence of our accompanist, Pen Ying Fang, remains a real anchor for the group, and I look forward to building on the great successes of this year in the following season.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Michelle Neary



The 2025-2026 season marked a milestone year for NAS – our first ever with a new Music Director after 57 years under the leadership of Clara Longstreth. We were thrilled to welcome Ben Arendsen to the podium and could not have asked for a better transition. He put together three interesting programs and led us well as we rehearsed them, even as we were learning his style and he was learning our voices.

We were also grateful to have a third and final year with our Assistant Conductor, T.J. Barnes. He was able to help bridge the transition, and it was fun to see his growth as a conductor navigating through three major years for NAS – the Arctic Explorations opera commission, Clara's last season, and Ben's first. We were lucky to have him and are looking forward to watching his career flourish!

In addition to our concerts, we held a successful spring benefit (detailed further in other reports) that tied in with the themes of our third concert, about freedom. The support for the benefit and our annual fund from the NAS community has been instrumental as we navigate forward through this period of change for NAS. We have also used this year as an opportunity to continue to invest in our future, exploring ways we can diversify our income, leverage databases, and make sure that our current marketing strategies continue to meet the moment. The board held a retreat in the fall to discuss our continued short and long term goals and how to accomplish them.

So far, it's clear that Ben's artistic vision aligns well with NAS's longstanding tradition of mixing old and new music along with performing lesser-known works, to which he also adds his own unique perspective. We are excited to see how NAS continues to evolve with him in the years to come!

TREASURER'S REPORT



Orren Alperstein

A transition to new leadership can often be a financially tricky and challenging time for any organization. However, I am pleased to report that NAS ended strong in this first year with our exciting new Music Director, Ben Arendsen, taking over after 57 years under the leadership of Clara Longstreth. Our year-end deficit amounted to only \$7,665, a significant improvement from our anticipated budget deficit of \$24,881.

Recognizing this big organizational change, we had budgeted quite conservatively in terms of both operating revenue and expenses, but there were several surprises along the way.

On the revenue side, we saw slight budget shortfalls in ticket sales (-\$2,132), dues/CD sales/music rentals (- \$1,000), and individual/corporate/foundation donations (- \$10,000). However, our annual benefit brought in a whopping \$34,000 more than anticipated, giving us a net increase of almost \$21,000 to our total revenue line. In addition, the growth of our endowment value (from \$367,234 to \$411,969) allowed us to comfortably take a higher endowment earnings transfer at year's end (\$12,117 vs. \$10,000), further increasing our income and fully covering our guest artist costs.

On the expense side, we made the decision to invest in some important donor management and software training, as well as personnel enhancements to help in our Promotion and Development areas. This led to higher expenses than anticipated, namely in Personnel (by \$2,469) and Promotion/Development (by almost \$17,000). These expenditures were offset by lower costs in other areas, such as Concert/Rehearsal/Music (-\$3,386) and Other Operating Expenses (-\$6,059).

We will continue to budget conservatively as we move through this transition time.

25-26 Ticket Sales

	Budgeted	In Person	Streaming	Total Income
December	\$10,000	\$7,603	\$1,182	\$8,785
March	\$7,000	\$5,615	\$820	\$6,435
May	\$7,000	\$5,347	\$1,151	\$6,498
TOTAL	\$24,000	\$18,565	\$3,153	\$21,718

TREASURER'S REPORT continued



Assets

	6/30/2025	6/30/2026
General Operating	\$127,966	\$113,928
Private Trust	\$27,407	\$25,418
Endowment	\$367,234	\$411,969
TOTAL	\$522,607	\$551,315

	2024-25 Actual	2025-26 Approved Budget	2025-26 Actual
REVENUE			
Ticket Sales & Performances	\$31,480	\$24,600	\$22,468
Dues/CD Sales/Music Rentals	\$17,106	\$14,100	\$13,099
Benefits & Events	\$56,507	\$20,000	\$54,527
Individual/Corporate/Foundation Donations	\$88,085	\$56,000	\$46,094
TOTAL REVENUE	\$193,178	\$114,700	\$136,188
EXPENSES			
Personnel	\$74,831	\$78,000	\$80,469
Concert, Rehearsal, Music	\$26,325	\$24,450	\$21,064
Promotion/Development	\$33,057	\$24,641	\$41,523
Other Operating Expenses	\$16,778	\$12,190	\$6,131
Outreach	\$0	\$500	\$0
Total General Operating Expenses	\$150,991	\$139,781	\$149,187
SPECIAL ACTIVITY EXPENSES			
Commissioned Works/Transition	\$9,594	\$0	\$0
Guest Artists	\$14,823	\$11,300	\$8,270
Covid-Related Expenses	\$489	\$500	\$501
Total Special Activity Expenses	\$24,906	\$11,800	\$8,771
TOTAL EXPENSES: GENERAL + SPECIAL	\$175,897	\$151,581	\$157,958
TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE	\$17,282	(\$36,881)	(\$21,770)
ENDOWMENT WITHDRAWAL	\$4,600	\$10,000	\$12,117
ANNIVERSARY FUND/PRIVATE FAMILY TRUST TRANSFER	\$19,657	\$1,000	\$1,000
INTEREST (CHECKING/SAVINGS)	\$1,789	\$1,000	\$988
NET TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE	\$43,328	(\$24,881)	(\$7,665)

LET FREEDOM SING

A Benefit Celebrating America at 250



To celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary, NAS chose the theme of "Let Freedom Sing" for our annual benefit, held in the Century Association's lovely Stanford White building on Monday, April 27, 2026. Nearly 80 guests enjoyed a fascinating evening that merged music and history. Ben Arendson, Rebecca Dee, Stefanie Izzo and Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff performed songs that explored the search for freedom in different eras of American history, accompanied by Elizabeth Rodgers on piano or Ben Arendson on guitar. And the guests were able to participate! A highlight for many was the group sing-along at several points in the evening's entertainment.

Dinner was held in the historic Billiards Room, where guests were treated to a moving presentation by Bob Palmer about Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1941 speech describing the "Four Freedoms" that all people deserve. In fact, this presentation was the inspiration for one of the most popular silent auction items: a tour of the Four Freedoms monument on Roosevelt Island that drew 13 participants in June. The Benefit itself netted \$18,900, while the accompanying Silent Auction netted \$5,360 and the Hamilton Ticket raffle for the chorus netted \$960, totalling \$25,220 of support for NAS.



All photos by Harold Levine

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NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS | 2025-2026



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Our concerts are made possible by the generous support of our donors. This donor list reflects contributions received from July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026.

If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, we apologize; please let us know by email at manager@nasingers.org.

NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

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