



Choral Arts in New England

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Encouraging Choral Excellence through Alfred Nash Patterson Grants

January 2015

CHORUS AMERICA HOLDS CONFERENCE IN BOSTON

Chorus America will hold its annual conference in Boston on June 17–20, 2015, hosted by the Handel and Haydn Society. A unique opportunity for choral leaders and singers to meet others with similar interests and to discover new aspects of choral music, the event typically brings together more than 400 choral conductors, administrators, singers, board members, and business members. There are plenary and breakout sessions with nationally known speakers, networking events, and concerts featuring leading area choruses. Last year's conference was in Washington, D.C.

This year's plenary speaker is Robert Putnam, author of *Bowling Alone* and *Better Together*. Performers include the Boston City Singers, Boston Gay Men's Chorus, Coro Allegro, Jameson Singers, and Lorelei Ensemble. The Handel and Haydn Society, conducted by Harry Christophers, will present a wide-ranging program on June 18 of choral music by J.S. Bach, Handel, and Palestrina as well as James MacMillan and Arvo Pärt, and a new work by Gabriela Lena Frank to celebrate the Society's bicentennial.

Registration for the event should open in late February. Non-members are welcome to attend (though member rates are lower); discounted admission will be offered to New England residents and to groups. Details are available at www.chorusamerica.org/conf2015.

MORE NEWS ONLINE

This printed edition is just a small selection of the chorus news and information available from Choral Arts New England. We invite you to visit

news.choralarts-newengland.org

where we welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions!

GERALD R. MACK

2014 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

The 2014 recipient of the Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award, Dr. Gerald R. Mack, is a nationally-known conductor, educator, and mentor. He was conductor of the Worcester Chorus in Massachusetts for 28 years (1976–2004), founder and leader for 15 years (1995–2000) of the Great Waters Music Festival in Wolfeboro, NH, and Director of Choral Activities and a faculty member for 27 years at the Hartt School of Music at the University of Hartford, Connecticut. After retiring to Nantucket in 1999, he became Executive Director of the Nantucket Community Music Center; he later established the Nantucket Art Council's highly successful winter concert series. The Worcester Chorus established a scholarship in his name in 2010.



Dr. Mack has worked with Gunther Schuller, Yehudi Menuin, Michael Lancaster, Seiji Ozawa, and Aaron Copland, among others. His choruses have performed at Carnegie Hall, Tully Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Jordan Hall, and Washington's National Cathedral, as well as at many of the great concert halls of Europe. He has conducted at the New York Mostly Mozart Festival, the Salzburg Music Festival, the International Dubrovnik Music Festival, and the Oaxaca Spring Festival, with the Mexican National Symphony.

(continued on next page)

Gerald R. Mack (cont'd)

A dedicated educator with a deep commitment to colleagues and students, Dr. Mack has a national reputation as an adjudicator, lecturer, clinician and guest conductor. His high school choirs appeared at numerous MENC conventions (of the National Association for Music Education). In 1961, his school chorus was invited to represent the U.S. at the International Music Educators' Convention in Vienna. His Hartt choral groups were frequently selected to appear at American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) conventions throughout the U.S., and he conducted many All State and Divisional Festival Choruses.

While at Hartt, he organized and hosted the first ACDA Eastern Division Convention.

One product of his involvement with the Connecticut Commission on the Arts was the Greater Hartford Youth Chorale, which Dr. Mack and his wife organized for the first annual Hartford Arts Festival. That initiative ended up continuing for 10 years, providing special musical opportunities for young people from 22 suburban and inner-city high schools in the Hartford area.

Dr. Mack has degrees in Music Education and choral conducting from the University of New York at Fredonia (bachelors) and from Columbia University (masters and doctorate).

2014 ALFRED NASH PATTERSON GRANTS

Choral Arts New England held its 30th annual Awards ceremony on October 19, 2014, at the First Unitarian Church in Worcester, Massachusetts. Thirteen New England choruses received grants.

Blue Heron Renaissance Choir, Auburndale, Mass., to support recording the Peterhouse Partbooks (third year of a four-year grant).

Boston City Singers, Boston, Mass., to commission new works from Jim Papoulis, to be performed at community-based public concerts in spring 2015.

Cantata Singers, Boston, Mass., to commission Elena Ruehr's *Eve*, based on a text from the book of Genesis, performed on November 8, 2014 at Jordan Hall in Boston.

Choral Art Society, Portland, Maine, for a program featuring the New England premiere of Robert S. Cohen's *Alzheimer's Stories* on May 9, 2015 with a pre-concert forum including the composer, representatives of the Alzheimer's Association, and Alzheimer's therapists and advocates.

The Concord Chorus, Concord, Mass., to commission from Michael Schachter an "American Requiem" incorporating English-language texts from a variety of faiths and cultures, to be performed in May 2016.

Crescendo, Lakeville, Conn., for a program of works by Domenico Zipoli (1688–1726), "the Italian-Argentinian Bach," performed in Lime Rock, Conn. and Great Barrington, Mass. in November 2014.

Greater Middletown Chorale, Middletown, Conn., to help fund a concert DVD of the 2013 world premiere of

Sarah Meneely-Kyder's oratorio, *Letter from Italy, 1944* (supported by a 2012 Alfred Nash Patterson grant).

Joyful Noise, Torrington, Conn., to record Brian Coughlin's Requiem, which includes both traditional texts and music and contemporary texts with "indie rock"-style music played by amplified chamber ensemble.

Massachusetts ACDA, Quincy, Mass., to support a performance of James Whitbourn's oratorio *Annelies* at the MassACDA 2014 Summer Conference in Northampton, Massachusetts, with singers from Coro Allegro and Chorus pro Musica.

The Master Singers of Lexington, Lexington, Mass., for commissions of six new works by Benjamin Cohen, Sara Doncaster, Allen Feinstein, Adam Grossman, Grant Hicks, and Rodney Lister, to be performed during the four concerts of the 2014–2015 season.

Music Worcester (The Worcester Chorus), Worcester, Mass., to support the Festival Singers program, a joint effort with the Worcester Public Schools that enables talented students of Worcester's South High School to learn, rehearse, and perform Handel's *Messiah* in Mechanics Hall as part of the Chorus.

New Haven Oratorio Choir, Hamden, Conn., for a performance on May 9, 2015 and recording of a selection of important but neglected works by historical and contemporary women composers.

RPM Voices of Rhode Island, Providence, R.I., to support the RPM Youth Voices choral program, an intensive 14-day workshop followed by performances of music from black American culture (particularly spirituals and gospel songs) in Providence city parks and at the RPM summer concert in Newport in July 2014.

SPRING NEW ENGLAND CHORAL HIGHLIGHTS

Choral music continues to flourish in New England. To date, some 200 events from late January to June 2015 have been posted to the Choral Arts New England events calendar.

Here are just a few season highlights. See the online newsletter for a more complete list of highlights (with links), and see the online calendar (www.choralarts-newengland.org/Calendar) for the complete and up-to-date set.

Premieres and choral commissions (by composer)

- Kati Agócs: *The Debrecen Passion*. Part of “Magyar Madness” by Lorelei Ensemble with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project [MA], 1/24/15.
- Samuel Beebe: *Riding on a Train at Rush Hour*, a short opera; with David Lang: *The Little Match Girl*. Boston Choral Ensemble [MA], 3/29/15.
- Lembit Beecher. Burlington Choral Society [VT], 4/25/15.
- Carson Cooman: *The Dawning Light*. Lorelei Ensemble [MA], 5/22, 5/23/15.
- Avner Dorman: music inspired by the holy city of Jerusalem. Seraphim Singers [MA], 4/26/15.
- Gabriela Lena Frank: Bicentennial commission. Handel and Haydn Society [MA], 6/18/15.
- Adam Grossman. Master Singers of Lexington [MA], 5/16/15.
- Shaw Pong Liú: *Peace is a Woman in a House*. Lorelei Ensemble [MA], 5/22, 5/23/15.
- John Ratledge: *The Divine Siren* (cantata based on 16th-century Italian poet Gaspara Stampa). New Hampshire Master Chorale [NH], 1/10, 1/11, 2/1/15.
- Steven Sametz: *Un Bacio* (A Kiss). CONCORDA [CT], 2/1/15.
- Tom Vignieri. Masterworks Chorale [MA], 5/8/15.

Major or especially interesting works

- J.S. Bach: Mass in B Minor. Musica Sacra [MA], 3/14/15; Rhode Island Civic Chorale & Orchestra [RI], 5/16, 5/17/15.
- J. S. Bach: *St. John Passion*. Boston Baroque [MA], 2/27, 2/28/15; Worcester Chorus [MA], 3/13/15.
- J.S. Bach: *St. Mark Passion* (reconstructed from the surviving libretto, using music from other Bach sources). King’s Chapel Choir [MA], 3/29/15.
- J.S. Bach: *St. Matthew Passion*. Handel and Haydn Society, 3/27, 3/29/15.
- Ludwig van Beethoven: *Missa Solemnis*. Nashoba Valley Chorale [MA], 1/31/15; Back Bay Chorale [MA], 3/21/15.

- Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 9; Arnold Schoenberg: *A Survivor From Warsaw*. Fairfield County Chorale and New Haven Symphony Orchestra [CT], 3/28, 4/2/15.
- Benjamin Britten: *Spring Symphony*; with orchestral works by John Harbison and Aaron Copland. Chorus pro Musica/N.E. Philharmonic [MA], 3/1/15.
- G.F. Handel: *Agrippina*. Boston Baroque [MA], 4/24, 4/25/15.
- G.F. Handel: *Israel in Egypt*. Metropolitan Chorale of Brookline and Zamir Chorale [MA], 3/7/15.
- G.F. Handel: *Judas Maccabaeus*. New Haven Chorale [CT], 5/16/15.
- G.F. Handel: *Messiah*. Concord Chorus [MA], 5/30/15.
- G.F. Handel: *Samson*. Brattleboro Music Center Concert Choir [VT], 5/17/15.
- F.J. Haydn: *The Creation*. South Hadley Chorale [MA], 3/15/15; Handel and Haydn Society [MA], 5/1, 5/3/15; Springfield Community Chorus [VT], 5/2, 5/3/15.
- Felix Mendelssohn: *Elijah*. Handel and Haydn Society [MA], 3/6, 3/8/15.
- Felix Mendelssohn: Symphony No. 2, “Hymn of Praise.” Dedham Choral Society [MA], 4/12/15.
- W.A. Mozart: Requiem. Newton Community Chorus [MA], 1/24/15; The Spectrum Singers [MA] 3/7/15; Greenwich Choral Society [CT], 3/14, 3/15/15; Fairfield County Chorale [CT], 5/9/15
- Carl Orff: *Carmina Burana*. Andover Choral Society [MA], 1/25/15; Mendelssohn Choir of Connecticut [CT], 5/2/15; Colby-Kennebec Choral Society [ME], 5/2, 5/3/15; Providence Singers [RI], 5/8, 5/9/15; Chatham Chorale (with highlights from the medieval *Carmina Burana* by Boston Camerata) [MA], 5/9, 5/10/15; Nashoba Valley Chorale [MA], 5/9/15; Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra & Chorus [CT], 5/25/15.
- Sergei Rachmaninoff: *All-Night Vigil*. Cantata Singers [MA], 1/24, 1/31/15.
- Igor Stravinsky: *Les Noces*. Chorus pro Musica [MA], 5/30/15.
- Karol Szymanowski: *King Roger*. Boston Symphony Orchestra/Tanglewood Festival Chorus [MA], 3/5/15, 3/7/15.
- Giuseppe Verdi: Requiem. Connecticut Choral Society, with the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra [CT], 4/25, 4/26/15; Handel Society of Dartmouth College [NH], 5/16/15.
- Defiant Requiem: Verdi at Terezín; created and conducted by Murry Sidlin. Tanglewood Festival Chorus with the Orchestra of Terezín Remembrance [MA], 1/27/15.

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www.choralarts-newengland.org

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR NEXT YEAR!

Application deadline: February 28, 2015
Forms and info: www.choralarts-newengland.org

Every year Choral Arts New England gives special grants to support choral music. Most grants have been in the \$1,000-2,000 range, but requests for larger (or smaller) amounts are considered. The money can be used to commission new music, hire instrumentalists, rent or purchase scores, pay travel expenses, or carry out a special project, either performing or non-performing. Generally, grants are meant to encourage special events and activities that might not be feasible without outside support.

Applicant organizations must be non-profit and certified tax-exempt by the IRS. Choruses or any organizations that provide support to choral music are eligible, including church choirs and school or college choruses.

See the website for more details and a list of past projects. Grant decisions are made by mid-April.

CHORAL GRAMMY NOMINEES

Choral music is especially vibrant live and in person, but a well-made choral recording can also be a source of great beauty. Here are this year's Grammy nominations for Best Choral Performance (winners are announced on February 8):

J.S. Bach: *Matthäus-Passion*. Akademie Für Alte Musik Berlin; Rias Kammerchor & Staats-Und Domchor Berlin, conducted by René Jacobs.

Torbjørn Dyrud: *Out Of Darkness*. Nidaros Cathedral Choir, conducted by Vivianne Sydnes. A remarkable new Passion setting.

Gustav Holst: *First Choral Symphony; The Mystic Trumpeter*. BBC Symphony Orchestra; BBC Symphony Chorus, conducted by Andrew Davis.

W.A. Mozart: *Requiem*. The Dunedin Consort, conducted by John Butt (an excellent reconstruction of how it might have sounded at the first performance).

***The Sacred Spirit Of Russia*.** Conspirare, led by Craig Hella Johnson. Russian Orthodox settings by Tchaikovsky, Kastalsky, Gretchaninov, Tchesnokov, Rachmaninov and others.