



# Choral Arts 2011: Identity, Inspiration, Innovation

April 9, 2011 at 2:30 p.m.  
Wellesley College Club, Wellesley, Mass.

## *Panel:*

**Donald Teeters**

Music Director of The Boston Cecilia

**Richard Coffey**

Founder and Artistic Director of CONCORA, Music Director of the Hartford Chorale

**Nick Page**

Founder and Artistic Director of the Mystic Chorale

**Johanna Hill Simpson**

Founder and Conductor Emerita of PALS Children's Chorus

**Moderator: Alysoun Kegel, Choral Arts New England**

*Please join us following the program for a cocktail reception to continue the discussion.*

*This event is dedicated to the memory of Robert Leech, one of the Founders of Choral Arts New England*

CHORAL ARTS NEW ENGLAND

P.O. Box 608, Newton, Massachusetts 02456

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# Program

## Call to Order

*Kristin Odmark, Chair of Choral Arts New England*

## Introduction of the Panel

*Alysoun Kegel, Moderator*

## The New England Choral Scene: A Historical Perspective

*Donald Teeters*

## A Tale of Two Choruses: Professional and Semi-Professional Choruses in New England

*Richard Coffey*

## Community Choruses: Singing as an Act of Compassion

*Nick Page*

## Back to the Choral Future: Getting Young People Hooked

*Johanna Hill Simpson*

## Moderated Discussion

*Alysoun Kegel, Panelists, and Audience*

## Reception

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### Some Considerations for Discussion

Choral singing is an essential part of New England, and nationwide it is the most popular form of participation in the performing arts. New England choruses have greatly grown in number and quality in the past several decades, connecting more singers and their audiences with music of the highest quality, and creating vibrant communities through song.

But these are challenging times for choruses. Attendance is down for all the performing arts, the nature of community participation is being changed by new social media, print arts coverage is declining while music sharing opportunities are increasing (if legal and technological obstacles can be met), and the next generation of singers is growing up with *American Idol* and *Glee*.

How have choruses grown and adapted and what will be next? A distinguished panel—leaders of professional choruses, auditioned and community choruses, and children’s choruses—explores these questions, with opportunities for the audience to join in the discussion.

Choral Arts New England was founded in 1979 by singers who wished to perpetuate the renaissance in choral performance spearheaded by Alfred Nash Patterson and to advance the standing of choral music as a great art form. It is hoped that today’s discussion will help us fulfill that mission.



**Donald Teeters** is now in his 42nd season as music director of The Boston Cecilia and his 44<sup>th</sup> season as music director and organist at All Saints Parish, Brookline. The first Boston choral conductor to engage players of period instruments for pre-19th century works, he conducted the Boston period-instrument premiere of Monteverdi's *1610 Vespers* in 1979, and the first American period-instrument performance of Bach's *St. John Passion* in 1981. In 1982, Teeters and Cecilia began what became a comprehensive survey of Handel's major dramatic works for chorus, performances that helped establish Boston as a world center for stylistic Handel interpretations and informed performance practice. Teeters has also led Cecilia in significant explorations of English music, especially that of Benjamin Britten, and American 20th century repertoire, including premieres and commissions from important New England composers such as Daniel Pinkham, Donald Martino, John Harbison, Robert Sirota, James Woodman, and Scott Wheeler.

In 1964, Alfred Nash Patterson offered Teeters the position of keyboardist for Chorus pro Musica; he later added associate conductor to the title. Fittingly, Teeters received the Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award from Choral Arts New England in 2005.



**Richard Coffey**, Artistic Director of CONCORA and Music Director of the Hartford Chorale, is one of New England's principal choral conductors. He founded CONCORA, Connecticut Choral Artists, as a professional vocal ensemble in 1974. Mr. Coffey is also Organist and Minister of Music of the South Church of New Britain, where he conducts a choir of professional and amateur singers and serves as Artistic Director of its Music Series.

Mr. Coffey has prepared choruses for the Hartford Symphony, Orchestra New England, the Springfield Symphony, the New Britain Symphony, the Waterbury Symphony, the Bard Music Festival, and the Harkness Summer Music Festival. For five seasons, he was chorus master of the Connecticut Opera Association. In 2007, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Greater New Britain Arts Alliance and a Major Achievement Award by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. In 2009 he received the Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award from Choral Arts New England. Mr. Coffey holds degrees in music from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the School of Sacred Music of New York's Union Theological Seminary.



**Nick Page** is a composer, conductor, author, and song leader. He directs the Mystic Chorale of Boston and leads sings and workshops throughout the Americas and Europe. He is the author of three books for teachers, including the *Sing With Us* songbook and *Sing And Shine On*, and has published over 65 choral pieces. He has a Music Education degree from Ithaca College and a Masters in Education from Lesley College.

In 1983, Page moved from his native New England to Chicago, where he worked as a conductor and Training Units Director with the 600-member Chicago Children's Choir. The experience changed his life. He became intoxicated with the worlds of Black Gospel and Jewish liturgical music. He studied the South African *Mbube* choral style with Joseph Shabalala of the group Ladysmith Black Mambazo and jazz and pop choral styles with Bobby McFerrin and Richard Greene from The Bobs. He studied Ethnomusicology, particularly the music of Africa and India. In 1990, he founded the Mystic Chorale, a 200 member chorus that presents multicultural concert/sing-a-longs where the audience is an equal partner in creating the music.



**Johanna (Jody) Hill Simpson** is one of the nation's preeminent children's conductors. She has worked with young people from kindergartners through graduate students at Dartmouth College, Lincoln Elementary School, Harvard University and the New England Conservatory, where she studied with Lorna Cooke DeVaron. She founded the PALS Children's Chorus in 1990 and served as its Artistic Director for 16 years, during which time PALS earned its reputation as one of the finest youth ensembles in the country. She has prepared children for performances under the batons of Seiji Ozawa, James Levine, Tan Dun, James Conlan, Marek Janowski, Keith Lockhart, Benjamin Zander, Stefan Asbury, and David Hoose. Jody is a champion of new music and has commissioned several major works for PALS. She is on the board of the Monadnock Music Festival, and most recently founded the Norway Pond Festival Singers and the Music on Norway Pond Concert Series in New Hampshire.

# Choral Arts New England

Choral Arts New England was formed in 1980 as the Alfred Nash Patterson Foundation, a memorial to the legendary “Bud” Patterson, who organized his first civic chorus in the mid-1940s and for the next thirty-five years exerted to the utmost his talent, musical intelligence, charm and élan to the furtherance of the choral arts. Bud lifted choral music in the Boston area from a kind of doldrums—largely rewarmed chestnuts—by means of innovative programming, merciless auditioning, and meticulous (albeit merry) rehearsals. Introducing both early liturgical works unheard for generations and daring new compositions heard for the first time, he added to audience enjoyment, choral skill, and the programming potential for symphony conductors. In addition to his first invention, the Chorus pro Musica, Bud Patterson conducted, at various times, the Brandeis University Chorus, the Cape Cod Chorale, the Worcester County Music Association, and the Worcester Festival Chorus.

Bud Patterson loved the choral arts and all those who practiced them. In his teaching at Tanglewood and Brandeis and through his personal example, he inspired a whole generation of singers and choral directors throughout New England. He was a cultural leader, articulating ambitious goals for choral music performance, chorus development, and choral music composition. He was a mentor and model for singers, conductors and composers.

On his death in 1979, many spontaneous gifts were received in his memory. Donors suggested the commissioning of new choral works, building a library of choral music, festivals, tours, and workshops as fitting memorials. A committee of distinguished music specialists was assembled to review project proposals. In this way, the Alfred Nash Patterson Foundation came into being.

Choral Arts New England strives to enrich the choral repertory by encouraging performance of new compositions and long-neglected works, to improve chorus administration, support chorus resources such as music libraries and collections, foster career development of choral directors, and encourage educational and public awareness programs concerned with the choral arts. These goals are achieved primarily through grants and advocacy.

Alfred Nash Patterson Foundation grants, administered by Choral Arts New England, are given annually for outstanding projects that further the choral arts. Some 166 grants, totaling nearly \$210,000, have been awarded since 1985. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented annually by Choral Arts New England to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to choral singing and its culture within New England. In addition, Choral Arts New England:

- Publishes *Chorus*, a newsletter which is distributed free of charge to some 350 New England choruses and to individual supporters of the choral arts;
- Maintains a directory of choruses of New England, which is available online at [www.choralarts-newengland.org](http://www.choralarts-newengland.org).
- Periodically conducts concerts, workshops, and other events to benefit the choral arts in New England.

More information is at [www.choralarts-newengland.org](http://www.choralarts-newengland.org), or call 617-721-SING.

## Apply for an Alfred Nash Patterson Grant!

Grants are awarded to New England choruses, both volunteer and professional, and to organizations that provide support to choral music. Church choirs and school or college choruses are also eligible. Applicant organizations must be tax-exempt non-profits.

The application is simple: It requires a project description and budget, applicant financial information, and recordings of the chorus. Get it at [www.choralarts-newengland.org](http://www.choralarts-newengland.org)

The deadline each year is February 28; decisions are announced in the spring.

## Choral Arts New England Board of Directors

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