2015–2016 CHORAL HIGHLIGHTS

Choral music continues to flourish in New England. Nearly 500 performances are listed on the Choral Arts New England events calendar between September 2015 and June 2016. 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)

This fall, New England choruses have already premiered works by Richard J. Clark, Mohammed Fairouz, and Jon Laukvik.


Deana Ingraham Gurney: Let Her In. Women in Harmony [ME]: 1/22/16, 1/23/16.


John McDonald: Uprights. Master Singers [MA]: 5/7/16.


(continued inside)
assistant conductor for choruses, sang in the alto section, assisted with the Robert Shaw Chamber Singers, and helped organize the Robert Shaw Institute. She sang and recorded with the Festival Singers both in France and in the U.S. After Shaw’s death in 1999, Jones was invited to conduct the Robert Shaw Tribute Singers for American Choral Directors Association conferences in San Antonio and Orlando.

Jones has traveled with a group of Boston University graduate students to Padua and Venice, Italy, and to Oslo and Bergen, Norway, to perform and to study. In 2009, the graduate conducting students joined Jones at the national ACDA convention in Oklahoma City, where she was invited to prepare and conduct the world premiere of a work by Dominick Argento. The conductors sang in the chorus and assisted in preparations for the performance.

Richard Cornell, interim director of the Boston University School of Music, has called Dr. Jones “a national force for choral art.” In his words: “With regular annual concerts in Symphony Hall, she has brought the experience of great choral music to thousands. At the School of Music Professor Jones established one of the finest graduate choral conducting programs anywhere and trained a new generation of brilliant conductors, many of whom now hold important academic or professional positions. The work of that new generation of choral directors now extends her legacy.”

Ann Howard Jones is a native of Iowa, and her degrees are from the University of Iowa.

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2015 Alfred Nash Patterson Grants

Choral Arts New England held its 31st annual awards ceremony on November 4, 2015, at The College Club of Boston, Massachusetts, where grants were presented to 12 New England choruses.

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

Cantilena Chamber Choir, Lenox, Mass., for a concert in Lenox on May 15, 2016 in honor of Tanglewood Music Center’s 75th anniversary featuring works by former Tanglewood composition fellows, including Lukas Foss, Elliot Carter, Michael Gandolfi, Thomas Oboe Lee, and John Harbison.

Chorus pro Musica, Boston, Mass., for a 25-minute commissioned work for chorus and brass band by composer Andy Vores, called Spencer the Rover, to be premiered in Cambridge on March 12, 2016.


Coro Allegro, Boston, Mass., for a collaborative project with Boston City Singers to expand Howard Frazin’s oratorio The Voice of Isaac to include adult voices, and to perform it in Cambridge on March 13, 2016.

Emmanuel Music, Boston, Mass., to support their reconstruction of J.S. Bach’s final passion, the St. Mark Passion, and its performance in Boston on March 19, 2016.

Journey Song Charitable Trust, Kensington, N.H., for a “Celebration of Hospice Music” in Exeter, N.H. on November 15, 2015, featuring the compositions and arrangements of Peter Amidon. Hospice music is meant to bring the comfort of vocal music, both secular and sacred, to those nearing the end of life.

Lorelei Ensemble, Cambridge, Mass., to support the commissioning of two new works by Tim Takach and Bryan Christian, to be premiered at a Christmas program in Boston on December 18–19, 2015.

Master Singers of Worcester, Worcester, Mass., for a concert in Worcester on October 25, 2015 that celebrates Armenian musical heritage and commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. The concert includes Dan Forrest’s Requiem for the Living and a newly-commissioned work by Stephan Barnicle.

Vermont Chapter, American Choral Directors Association, Burlington, Vt., for the “Gather at the River” conference in Hanover, N.H. on June 26–27, 2015, which included workshops, seminars and performances open to all choral musicians.

Wescustago Youth Chorale, Yarmouth, Maine, to support hiring a one-year Development Coordinator to pursue opportunities that were identified through a strategic planning process.

Women in Harmony, Portland, Maine, for a performance of Diane Benjamin’s Where I Live (A Breast Cancer Oratorio) in Portland on May 20–21, 2016, in partnership with the Cancer Community Center in Scarborough, Maine.
Choral Highlights (cont’d)
Andy Vores: Spencer the Rover. Chorus pro Musica [MA]: 3/12/16.

Major or especially interesting works

Hector Berlioz: Te Deum; Resurrext. Boston Symphony Orchestra/Tanglewood Festival Chorus [MA]: 2/25/16, 2/26/16, 2/27/16.
Leonard Bernstein: Mass (selections). Metropolitan Chorale of Brookline [MA]: 5/21/16
Antonin Dvorak: Te Deum. Collaborative performance by a massed choir from high school choruses throughout Vermont, with the Vermont Youth Orchestra. Vermont Youth Orchestra [VT]: 1/31/16.
Felix Mendelssohn: Elijah. Hartford Chorale [CT]: 4/14/16.
Claudio Monteverdi: Vesper of 1610. Yale Schola Cantorum [CT]: 4/15/16.
Carl Orff: Carmina Burana, with piano and percussion. New Haven Chorale [CT]: 4/21/16, 4/24/16.
Arvo Pärt: Passio. Yale Schola Cantorum [CT]: 2/21/16.
John Rutter: Mass of the Children; A Choral Fanfare; O Clap Your Hands; Musica Dei domum; other works. Heritage Chorale [MA]: 11/22/15.
Giuseppe Verdi: Requiem. Nashoba Valley Chorale [MA]: 4/23/16; Boston Philharmonic/Chorus pro Musica [MA]: 4/24/16; Oratorio Chorale [ME]: 5/14/16, 5/15/16; Chorus of Westerly [RI]: 5/14/16, 5/15/16.
Antonio Vivaldi: Clap Your Hands; Musica Dei donum; other works. New Haven Chorale [CT]: 4/21/16, 4/24/16.

Domingo De Gama: Alice in Wonderland. Metropolitan Opera Orchestra [CT]: 5/21/16.
Giuseppe Verdi: Requiem. Nashoba Valley Chorale [MA]: 4/23/16; Boston Philharmonic/Chorus pro Musica [MA]: 4/24/16; Oratorio Chorale [ME]: 5/14/16, 5/15/16; Chorus of Westerly [RI]: 5/14/16, 5/15/16.
In 1990, the Cantata Singers developed a unique collaborative program with the Boston Public Schools, called Classroom Cantatas, in which elementary, middle and high school students create and perform their own musical “cantatas.” The program has since touched the lives of thousands of children. In residencies that range from four-week after-school workshops to 18-session semester-long classes, students from participating schools work with Teaching Artists—musicians from Cantata Singers—to compose original songs about subjects they are studying in class or about larger cultural and historical issues. Working with the Teaching Artists, the students choose or create texts; then, in small groups, they compose songs from those texts, which are translated into standard music notation and assembled into larger cantatas. The program culminates in a performance where all participating schools jointly present their work to an audience of teachers, families and friends. In over two decades of Classroom Cantatas, students have composed and performed over 300 songs. Now most of that material has been made available online, at www.cantatasingers.org/community/online-library.

The library contains engraved scores for classroom cantatas and, in many cases, recordings of the music. The cantatas and recordings in this library are a resource for classroom teachers who need a catchy tune to help their students remember a math concept; music teachers looking to incorporate composition into their own classes; or anyone wishing to share our collective history and culture—from the civil rights movement, to stories of immigration and celebrating diversity—with young people.

**In Memoriam: Elaine Bowditch**

We regret to report the death, on October 1, 2015, of Elaine Panaretos Bowditch, one of the founders of Choral Arts New England, who served on our Board in virtually every capacity from 1985–1997. Elaine’s leadership and energy contributed greatly to our organization, and her life-long love of singing and of choruses was a constant inspiration. We remember her with gratitude and joy.