



Concord Women's Chorus

Jane Ring Frank, Artistic Director

CWCnews

Vol. 1 No. 1

November • 2011

About the Chorus

Concord Women's Chorus is composed of 60-70 singers from 19 communities in and around Concord, Massachusetts. Expertly directed by Jane Ring Frank, and accompanied by Scott Nicholas on piano, the chorus performs a wide variety of choral music including classical, contemporary and newly composed music.

CWC is a member of the Greater Boston Choral Consortium and Chorus America. The chorus has also collaborated with the Concord Orchestra in several concerts.

CWCnews

Vol. 1, No. 1
November 2011

Editors:
Cynthia Sorn
Laura Weiss

Layout Artist:
Peggy Wargelin

Contributing writers:
Kathleen Chapman
Jane Ring Frank

Printing:
Windfall Software

View From the Chair

by Kathleen Chapman, Chair

I am delighted to introduce the first Concord Women's Chorus newsletter. Now in my second year as chair of the CWC board, I feel privileged not only to be a member of this dynamic, talented group, but also to have such a loyal and enthusiastic audience.



You may well ask, why a newsletter, and why now, in CWC's 52nd year? The timing for a newsletter feels right because of how much we've grown as an organization during the past several seasons. When I joined the chorus in 2003, we included about 40 members. Now, just eight years later, we have nearly 60 voices from communities as geographically wide ranging as Ayer and Boston.

When we describe our history, we often refer to the infancy of our chorus as a handful of moms who met in each other's homes for the sheer joy of communal singing. While we have never lost the thrill we feel in coming together to make music, we have broadened our goals to include creating a professional sound in our concerts and reaching out to the broader community in a variety of ways. We have achieved a great deal of success in each of these missions.

Working to expand our community outreach has been a hugely rewarding labor of love. During the past few seasons, we were guest performers in several Concord Orchestra concerts. We toured in England in the summer of 2010, showcasing music

(continued on page 2)

Director's Thoughts

by Jane Ring Frank, Artistic Director

In December, CWC presents *Lights of Memory*, and it is hard to believe that it is my 19th holiday concert with this group. This year I put my mind to assembling a program that is all at once diverse, challenging, and rich in beautiful melodies. In the end, we have a concert that features a set of John Rutter's carols, Michelle Weir's jazzy arrangements of well-known Christmas songs, and a lovely Chanukah song by theatre composer Stephen Schwartz. At the heart of the program are two of my favorite works for women's voices – two opposingly powerful pieces: Arvo Pärt's crisply rhythmic, yet restrained, *Peace upon You, Jerusalem* and Ralph Vaughan Williams's boldly romantic *Magnificat*.

(continued on page 3)

Performance Schedule

Winter Concert: *Lights of Memory*

Saturday, December 17, 2011, 2:00 PM

Featuring:

Vaughn Williams' *Magnificat*

Arvo Pärt's *Peace Upon You, Jerusalem*

Works by Rutter

Michelle Weir's jazz arrangements of Christmas carols

Spring Concert: *Earth Songs*

Sunday, May 6, 2012, 4:00 PM

To order tickets: (978) 852-4239

Adults: \$25

Seniors/Students: \$20

12 and under: \$10

Concert Location: Trinity Episcopal Church
81 Elm Street
Concord, MA

All concerts are handicap accessible.

We Appreciate Your Support!

Benefactor:
\$1,000 and above

Sponsor:
\$500–999

Patron:
\$200–499

Donor:
\$50–199

Friend:
\$10–49

Concord Women's Chorus to Perform Benefit Concert for Wayside Hospice

The Concord Women's Chorus (CWC) is continuing its partnership with Wayside Hospice, performing a benefit holiday concert on Tuesday, December 20, 2011 at the Weston Golf Club, Weston, Massachusetts. Doors will open at 10:30 AM, and the concert will begin promptly at 11 AM.



Following the concert, an elegant holiday luncheon will be served in the club's banquet rooms. The public is invited to participate in this worthy cause. For reservations call 508-358-3000, ext.260.

CWC's long relationship with Wayside Hospice began around 1970 when the chorus presented a benefit concert for the first hospice service in Massachusetts, "Hospice at Home," at First Parish Church in Weston. At this special performance, a standing-room-only crowd fell silent as twenty singers carrying lighted candles processed into the darkened stone chapel, singing Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*. Wayside Hospice serves patients in two ways: at patients' homes in Concord, Lincoln, Sudbury, Wayland, Weston and surrounding areas; and also in the Wayside Hospice Residence at Traditions in North Wayland. Wayside Hospice is a service of Parmenter VNA, Wayland.

(from Chair, page 1)

by American women composers for British audiences. This season we participated in Trinitarian Congregational Church's 9/11 memorial concert in Concord. And following our December 17 concert, *Lights of Memory*, we will be renewing our relationship with Parmenter Hospice, performing holiday music to benefit the hospice community.

Of course, the best way to know us is to keep attending our concerts to experience our unique sound; the thrilling offerings by our professional guest soloists and our incredible accompanist Scott Nicholas; and the thought-provoking, beautiful repertoire chosen by Artistic Director Frank, who has truly made us who we are. We very much look forward to seeing you in our audience on December 17 and hope that you enjoy getting to know us just a bit better in this and future newsletters.

Spring Season Dedicated to Songs of Nature

Mark your calendars! CWC's spring concert, *Earth Songs*, will be on Sunday, May 6, 2012 at 4:00 pm in the Trinity Episcopal Church, Concord, Massachusetts. The program is dedicated to songs of nature and features a stirring set of English Edwardian part-songs with songs by Holst, Bridge and Stanford, as well as set of English madrigals, and works by Copland and MacGillivray.



In 2010 the chorus celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special gala concert and commission – the world premiere of *Concord Fragments* by renowned American composer Libby Larsen. Also, in the summer of 2010 the chorus performed in several venues on a tour of England.

Donations may be made at:

concordwomenschorus.org

or by mail to:

Concord Women's Chorus
c/o Patsy Eickelberg
7 Concord Greene, Unit 8
Concord, MA 01742

All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

For more information visit

concordwomenschorus.org

(from *Director*, page 1)

In addition to phenomenal pianist Scott Nicholas, we are privileged to bring you two talented soloists: mezzo-soprano and long-time Cambridge resident Mary Gerbi, and flautist Tim Macri, of Jamaica Plain.

Arvo Pärt

Born and educated in Estonia, Arvo Pärt (b. 1935) worked as a film and television composer and studied at the Tallinn Conservatory. His early works were heavily influenced by Russian neoclassic composers, such as Shostakovich and Prokofiev. Living in the old Soviet Union, Pärt had little access to what was happening in contemporary Western music. Despite such isolation, he helped lead a movement among Estonian composers to experiment with new methods of composition, especially serialism or twelve-tone music. Pärt was at the forefront of Estonian serialism through the mid 1960s but ultimately tired of its rigors and moved on to experiment with collage techniques. Collage is defined as the insertion of borrowed musical material, from composers such as Bach and Tchaikovsky, into a formal serial structure.

Composed in 1968, Pärt's *Credo* represented the last "collage" piece he composed before entering a long period of compositional silence. The beginning of his *Credo* alters the opening of the liturgical *Credo* ("I believe in One God" becomes "I believe in Jesus Christ"). Soviet officials saw the title and text as political provocation. Though the composer insisted on the absence of any political agenda, his own devout religiosity led authorities to read *Credo* as a manifesto of passive resistance to the Soviet government. Indeed, the premiere may not have even happened if a particular official hadn't been out of town at the time; after the first performance it was banned in the Soviet Union for several years.

From 1968 to 1971, Pärt stopped composing and, during this period of discernment, turned to the music of medieval France, the Renaissance Franco-Flemish composers, and

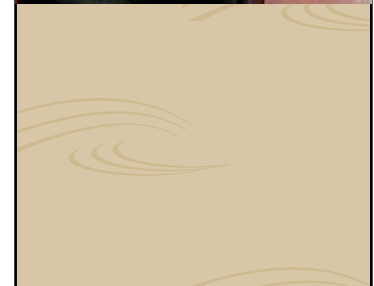
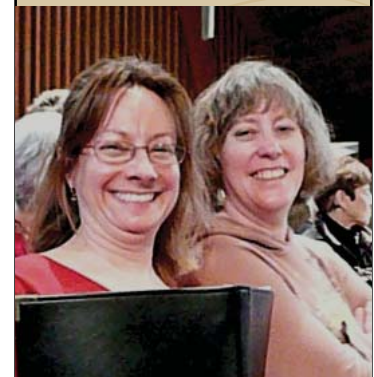
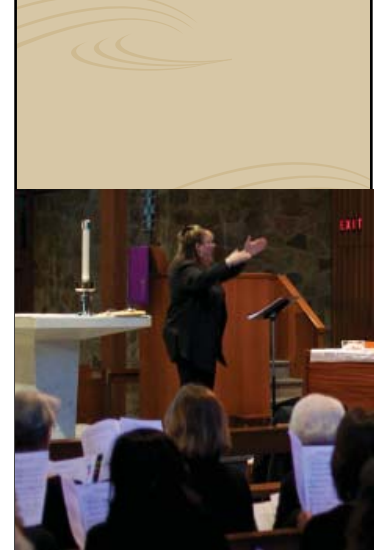
Gregorian chant for inspiration. Since that time, Pärt has worked in a minimalist style that employs a self-made compositional technique called "tintinnabuli," derived from the Latin word for bells. "This is the whole secret of tintinnabuli," he says. "The two lines. One line is who we are, and the other line is who is holding and takes care of us."

Pärt's choral music has been characterized by a deceptive simplicity. *Peace upon You, Jerusalem* is a rendering of Psalm 122 ("I rejoiced that they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of Yahweh'"). It represents an extension of the composer's earlier "tintinnabuli." Pärt tells us, "In some way, we go back to the tintinnabuli...one line is like freedom, and the triad line is like discipline. It must work together." The composer uses abrupt cutoffs followed by moments of silence to allow for the sounds of the choir to hang in the air and for the overtones to magically reverberate. The piece also depends upon the acoustics of a live space as an integral part of its compositional effect and offers quietly moving pleas for peace to our war-swept and troubled world.


Ralph Vaughan Williams

While Pärt finds strength in a straightforward, unpretentious compositional style, British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams knew his way around a melody, exploiting the power and evocative range of the texts he set. As a choir director and organist, Vaughan Williams was quite familiar with the *Magnificat's* inclusion in the traditional Anglican Evensong service. The text of the *Magnificat* appears in the Gospel of Luke ("My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour"). It is a canticle (defined as a song or chant, especially a nonmetrical hymn taken from a biblical text) that Mary sings to her cousin Elizabeth as she praises God and speaks of the fulfillment of the coming of the Messiah with the imminent birth of Jesus. It is one of the loveliest poems in the New Testament and has inspired

(continued on page 4)




(from *Director*, page 3)

numerous composers to set it to music. Vaughan Williams composed his *Magnificat* in 1932, and its first performance took place at the Worcester Cathedral Three Choirs Festival in September of that year. The solo writing is extremely ornate, evoking the music of the composer's dear friend, Gustav Holst. The prominent flute part, the composer informs us, represents the Holy Spirit. The choral writing is bold and haunting, punctuating the enfolding revelation of Mary's drama. Despite the ecclesiastical venue of its first performance, the composer was careful to point out that the work is not designed for liturgical use. "I am trying to lift the words out of the smug atmosphere which had settled on it for so long," he wrote to a friend on its completion. "I don't know if I have succeeded – I find it awfully hard to eradicate it." Vaughan Williams achieved his goal beautifully; the whole work is suffused with the joy and wonderment of a young woman chosen for perhaps the strangest moment in history. 



Pianist Scott Nicholas has performed in Europe, Bermuda, Latin America and throughout the United States.

Locally, Mr. Nicholas has appeared all over the New England region in solo and chamber performances. He received his B.A. in music education from The College of New Jersey, a M.M. from the England Conservatory in accompanying/vocal coaching, and did post graduate work at the University of Minnesota and

New England Conservatory. He is on the faculty of Emerson College, Suffolk University and the Franklin School for the Performing Arts, where he teaches piano and coaches opera and music theatre. 



Jane Ring Frank is pleased to begin her 19th year as Artistic Director of the Concord Women's Chorus. With degrees in conducting, as well as collaborative piano, Frank is a Resident Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center of Brandeis University, Minister of Music at the First Congregational Church in Winchester, and has just been appointed as the new Music Director of Cantemus, a 40-voice chamber chorus located on Boston's North Shore. From 1997-2009, Frank was the Artistic Director and Founder of Boston Secession, one of the city's premiere professional choral ensembles. Critically acclaimed by the *Boston Globe* ("extraordinary chorus, notable for its beautiful balance, and musical surety...") and Tom Garvey's *Hub Review* ("lushly transparent singing conducted with intelligence and wit"), Frank conducted and produced two CDs which were outstandingly reviewed by the *New York Times*, *Gramophone*, and *American Record Guide*, along with other journals, magazines, and blogs. For a number of years, she served as Conductor for E.C.S. Publishing Company's professional, recording, choral ensemble, Philovox, as well as a 10-year faculty member at Emerson College. 

CWC operates as a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation under Chapter 180: Section 4 of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

