

cantemusnews

Cantemus Chamber Chorus Biannual Newsletter

Vol. 2/No. 2 • April 2001



CANTEMUS
Small Chorus, Grand Sound.

Cantemus Chamber Chorus

Sopranos

Ruth Berry
Claire M. Cayot
Katy Fickenwirth
Donna Gale
Jennifer Hand
Patty Kennedy
Pamela J. Morris
Susan Nash

Altos

Peter B. Hoyt
Dorothy Monnelly
Christine Reif
Marilyn A. Shepard
Marcia Siegel
Marjorie Short
Leslie Suggs Todd
Debby Twining
Nancy Weinberg

Tenors

Tim Bakland
Chris Barker
Jamie Cabot
Gary Freeman
Mark Pierce
Larry Zwicker

Basses

Jim Berry
Richard Blumenscheid
Jud Brooks
Bill Gelwick
J. Douglas Guy
Todd Hermann
Ron Pressler
Nathaniel Pulsifer

Music Director

John Hoffacker

Accompanist

Robert Littlefield

Cantemus Chamber Chorus

P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA 01938

Toll free information
1-888-CHORUS-1

www.cantemus.org

The Courage of Composers

by John Hoffacker

You find a poem. It moves you and speaks to you. It reveals something you feel passionate about. It becomes a part of you—and you become part of it. You want to tell everyone about this experience.

If you are a composer, chances are you will set the poem to music. But what a chance you take! When you impose your rhythm, your accents, your structure on the poem, you change it. It is no longer the pure product of a single poetic mind. If you are a good composer, your music and the poetry will fuse into a single work, where neither the music nor the poem outweighs the other. The music creates a world in which the story and sense of the poem are not only made clear, but also conveyed in a mood appropriate to them. Capturing all the aspects of a poem—especially a great poem—is an extraordinarily challenging and greatly rewarding task for a composer.

In our concerts on June 1st and 2nd, 2001, we will present six evocative and beautiful settings of great poetry. The first half of the program features the work of composers who selected poetic texts about music—their own life's passion. The music in the second half was written by composers who selected poems reflecting a particular interest: for Hindemith, the passage of years in a life; for Ives, peace; and for Rutter, the joys of childhood. 🎵

Preview ▶ Vorschau ▶ Exhibition préalable

SPRING 2001 PROGRAM

<i>At a solemn music</i>	Emma Lou Diemer
<i>Hymn to St. Cecilia</i>	Benjamin Britten
<i>To Saint Cecilia</i>	Norman Dello Joio

— Intermission —

<i>Six chansons</i>	Paul Hindemith
<i>Serenity</i>	Charles Ives
<i>Five Childhood Lyrics</i>	John Rutter



Cantemus singers rehearse for the June concert.

Board of Directors Seeks Community Involvement

Over the past couple of years, the Cantemus Board of Directors has discussed recruiting non-singing members to increase community input into our administration. We want to make sure our programming and outreach activities are effectively serving our community, and one way to do that is to invite people who are external to the group to serve on the Board of Directors. People who are active in the musical life of this area and who are familiar with Cantemus can provide an objective perspective on our activities to help us improve our programming and solidify our ties to the community.

This year, Hugh McCall has joined the Board of Directors as a member at large. An Ipswich resident, Hugh has been attending Cantemus concerts for years, and he brings considerable musical, financial, and administrative expertise to the table. Currently Controller at the Boston Athenaeum, Hugh is also a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the vestry and choir at Ascension Memorial Church in Ipswich. Hugh served as the organist, choirmaster, and treasurer at Ascension for years, and he has also served as treasurer of the Cambridge Society of Early Music and the Gloucester Stage Company. Hugh holds a bachelor's and a master's degree in music from St. Olaf College and Boston University, respectively, as well as an M.B.A.

We are thrilled to welcome Hugh to the Cantemus Board of Directors, and we are looking for additional external members to serve on the Board for our 2001-2002 season. If you are interested in serving on the Board or finding out more about how the Board functions, please contact Ruth Berry, Cantemus President, at 617-623-4426. 🎵

Cantemus is supported in part by funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, as administered locally by the Beverly, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich, and Newburyport Cultural Councils.

What Is Cantemus?

Founded in 1982, *Cantemus* (Latin for "Let us sing") is a nonprofit organization composed of about 30 voices from across the North Shore. The group is dedicated to the performance of music composed for chamber chorus. Its repertoire ranges from medieval and Elizabethan to Baroque, Classical, Romantic and contemporary music from around the world.

Board of Directors 2000-2001

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 all concerts are
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programs are available

Composers Behind "Songs of the Poets"



Conductor's Notes for June 2001 Concert



John Hoffacker, Music Director

Born in 1895, **Paul Hindemith** was playing violin and viola at age 13 with dance bands and in theatres around Frankfort-am-Main. In the 1920s he gained international recognition as a composer and taught at the *Berlin Hochschule für Musik* from 1927 until 1934, when the fascist government decided his music was too modern. In 1940 Hindemith came to the United States and completely revamped the music program at Yale University. He taught at Yale until 1953, and from his studio emerged some of the twentieth century's greatest composers. Perhaps not since Nadia Boulanger has there been such a profound single influence on the future of musical composition. Hindemith died in Zurich in 1963.

Hindemith's music essentially follows traditional models, using a scientifically-derived tonal system as its base. His *Six Chansons* are carefully based on 16th-century French madrigal style, mixing solo and ensemble textures and exquisitely portraying the sense and story of the texts. The six songs might be interpreted as depicting a life, beginning with delight in youth, mourning the quick passage of maturity, and finally finding redemption after death. As a set, these pieces constitute some of the most significant modern works for chamber chorus.

Perhaps the most famous student of Paul Hindemith was **Norman Dello Joio** (born 1913), who in 1957 received the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his *Meditations on Ecclesiastes* for string orchestra. It's no coincidence that this masterpiece derives from Biblical origins—Dello Joio began his career (also at age 13) as a church organist in New York City. His family included several musicians, including Pietro Yon, who composed the inescapable "Gesu Bambino." Dello Joio blazed like a meteor in the New York music scene in the 1950s, and he was eventually named head of the Music Division of Boston University, where he worked until retiring from academic life to devote himself entirely to composing.

Dello Joio's music combines great lyricism, expressive melodies, and a tremendous sense of rhythm. Always compelling, the music delivers the text in bold, dramatic ways. For his cantata *To Saint Cecilia*, Dello Joio selected text from John Dryden's (1631-1700) poem

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day and arranged the accompaniment for either piano, organ, or brass ensemble. The instrumental introduction lays out the rhythmic and melodic themes that recur throughout the piece. The entire work builds gradually to a powerful conclusion, proclaiming music's primal role in the creation of the universe.

Another student from Hindemith's studio was **Emma Lou Diemer** (born 1927), who calls herself a "situational composer." Diemer says of herself, "Most of my music has been produced within a certain context: composition student, composer-in-residence, organist/choir director in various churches, university professor. If I had been apprenticed to a ballet company, a symphony orchestra, or an opera company, I would have written music for that situation... I have little affinity with the composers who write only for their fellow composers. Some of history's dullest, most ephemeral music has been produced for that reason."

As it turns out, Diemer's career has taken her from composer-in-residence for the Richmond, Virginia public schools to Southern California. She has spent the last sixty years as a church musician and freelance composer, as well as professor of composition at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Diemer's work "At a Solemn Music," which sets the poem by John Milton, begins with the line "Blest pair of sirens, pledges of heaven's joy." A quasi-religious text, it graphically depicts the sounds of heaven and earth—concord and discord—that eventually unite in a triumphant hymn. 🎵



SPRING 2001 CONCERT SCHEDULE

Songs of the Poets

Friday, June 1 at 8:00 p.m.

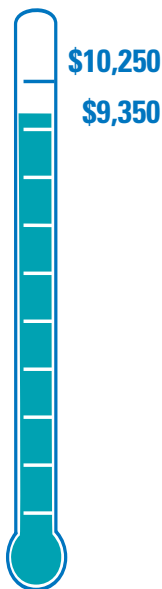
Christ Church
149 Asbury Street
Hamilton

Saturday, June 2 at 8:00 p.m.

Central Congregational Church
14 Titcomb Street
Newburyport

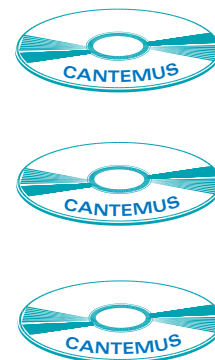
Fundraising Update

As we approach our fund-raising goal for the 2000-2001 concert season, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our loyal supporters, for your generosity. To date we have received individual donations totaling \$9,350, leaving us just \$900 shy of our goal of \$10,250. With three months left in this year's campaign, we are confident that we will reach our goal! Your generous donations have allowed us to expand to a four-concert season, plan for more concerts with orchestral accompaniment, and undertake the production of a second CD, due out this fall. Cantemus wouldn't be where it is today without your support! 🎵



Cantemus Records Second CD

Thanks to the generous financial support of our community, Cantemus has been able to finance the recording of a second CD to follow the release of our first CD, *Joy Shall Be Yours*. We began recording pieces for our second CD in the Spring of 2000, singing in the beautiful acoustics provided by the chapel at Turner Hill (formerly La Salette) in Ipswich. We will hold a second recording session at Turner Hill this June to finish the CD. The new recording will feature highlights from our Spring 2000, Winter 2001, and Spring 2001 repertoire. Watch for the new CD this fall! 🎵



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Please make
checks payable
to **Cantemus**
and mail to:

P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA
01938

Cantemus Survey and Order/Contribution Form

What kinds of music (genre and/or specific pieces) would you most like to hear Cantemus perform?

What kinds of music (genre and/or specific pieces) would you prefer NOT to hear?

Can you recommend any new performance venues for Cantemus?

Would you be interested in sponsoring a performance of a specific work or works? If so, please describe:

- I'd like to have my name added to the Cantemus mailing list.
- I'd like to purchase ___ (number) of the Cantemus *Joy Shall be Yours* CD(s) (\$15 per CD plus \$2.50 per order for shipping). \$ _____
- I am enclosing my tax-deductible contribution of: \$ _____
- Total amount enclosed:** \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ E-Mail: _____



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Meet the Basses

Jim Berry has sung throughout his life in choirs, including the Miami University Men's Glee Club, the Newburyport Choral Society, and Coro Stella Maris. With Cantemus, Jim has appeared as the bass soloist in Faure's Requiem and Buxtehude's "Cantate Domino." He is retired from a 30-year career in federal personnel management, most recently with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Jim now devotes most of his time to his passions—field ornithology and the protection of open space.

Richard Blumenscheid grew up in Westfield, NJ and has sung in various church choirs. Richard was a member of the Chapel Choir while attending Susquehanna University and currently sings with the choir at St. Paul's Church, Newburyport. He is a project manager in the Information Systems area of the Liberty Mutual Group. Richard lives in Newburyport with his wife Sue, his daughter Anna, and his son Ben, and he enjoys watching Formula 1 races.

Jud Brooks gave up on singing after high school but came back to it about eight years ago through the encouragement of friends who sing. Since then, Jud has sung with the Newburyport Choral Society, the Paul Madore Choral, and the Berkshire Choral Festival, and he has participated in the Masterworks Summer Program and Belmont's opening workshops. For the past ten years, Jud has worked for the Trustees of Reservations at their Long Hill property in Beverly, MA.

J. Douglas Guy is a Germanist, a textbook author, editor, and media consultant, a translator/interpreter, and most recently a marketing researcher. Doug has taught German and Russian in several schools and community colleges and has served as a college counselor and admissions officer.



Right to left: Ron Pressler, Richard Blumenscheid, Doug Guy, Jud Brooks, Jim Berry. Not pictured: Nat Pulsifer.

Musically, Doug has performed in musical theater, sung in high school, and done a lot of three-part harmony in coffee houses. He served as a student conductor and accompanist for his high schools choirs and then took a long musical hiatus before joining Cantemus. Doug lives in Byfield with his wife, Kathy, and his two sons, Jonathan and Nicolas.

Ron Pressler, a retired music teacher and fine arts director with the Amesbury Public Schools, is currently a Special Education Tutor and the Peer Mediation Program Coordinator at the Charles Cashman Elementary School in Amesbury. A finalist in both the Metropolitan Opera auditions for the Connecticut Region and the Baltimore Opera auditions, Ron has sung the roles of the Mikado, Pooh-Bah, Sir Joseph Porter, the Earl of Mountararat, Sir Richard Cholmondeley, and Luiz with the Ipswich Summer Theatre and the Northshore Light Opera. Prior to Cantemus, Ron sang with the Apollo Consortium and the New England Vocal Ensemble, and he is a bass soloist with the Winchester Unitarian Church. 🎵