

CANTEMUS NEWS

Cantemus Chamber Chorus Semi-annual Newsletter

Vol. 6 / No. 1 • March 2004



CANTEMUS
Small Chorus. Grand Sound.

Cantemus Chamber Chorus

Sopranos

Leah Campbell
Claire Cayot
Katy Fickenwirth
Donna Gale
Janet Glasser
Elaine Gomperts
Anne Maguire
Pamela Morris
Susan Nash
Suzie Reine
Bettina Turner

Altos

Debra Basile
Elizabeth Lebel
Pat Lowery Collins
Priscilla March
Dorothy Monnelly
Robin Moore
Chris Reif
Debby Twining
Betsy Vicksell
Nancy Weinberg

Tenors

Tim Bakland
Chris Barker
Jamie Cabot
Nicholas Fiszman
Gary Freeman
Bill Gelwick
Mark Pierce

Basses

Richard Blumenscheid
Bill Dowdall
Michael Fosburg
David Geikie
Doug Guy
Nat Pulsifer
Richard Salandrea
Conrad Willeman

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



John Hoffacker,
Music Director

Dona Nobis Pacem

by John Hoffacker, Music Director

Virtuosity is stunning. A seemingly superhuman power is unleashed in human performance. You will feel this power in our April concert.

Dixit Dominus is Handel's description of the majesty of God. The year was 1707. Newly arrived in Rome, Handel was dazzled by the fantastic Baroque architecture and sculptures of St. Peter's Basilica. He also found the Roman orchestras and choruses amazingly skillful. In response, he wrote a breathtaking eight-movement setting of Psalm 110 for soloists, chorus, and string orchestra. Yes, the music takes a lot of preparation to perform well, but Handel's choral music is never empty.

The sweep, the power, and the rich personal meaning of the text is conveyed in his cantata. When it refers to the enemy as a footstool, the music leaps in confident thrusts. "Leaving him in ruins" calls for a cascade of notes ending in silence. A perfect wedding of text and music, *Dixit Dominus* is virtuoso choral music at its most glorious.

Ralph Vaughan Williams took on the same challenge – setting powerful poetry with intensely expressive music – with a virtuosic compositional skill perhaps unmatched in the 20th century.

His sources were the Civil War poetry of Walt Whitman, a speech by British parliamentarian John Bright, and the Bible. Overarching all the poetry is the ancient prayer "Dona nobis pacem" – "Give us peace," sung at the beginning and at the end by a lone soprano voice.

Honoring the sacrifice of all who fight for a cause and yet holding up their common



JOIN CANTEMUS FOR *Dona Nobis Pacem*

Saturday, April 17, 2004 7:30 p.m.

Christ Church of Hamilton and Wenham
149 Asbury Street, Hamilton, MA

Sunday, April 18, 2004 4:00 p.m.

Central Congregational Church
Pleasant & Titcomb Streets
Newburyport, MA

humanity, Vaughan Williams depicts war's tumult and its effects on families. The music is at times martial, at times serene, and always expressive not only of the text of the moment but of the overall dramatic sense of the poetry.

Come to our concerts on April 17 and 18.
The music will change you. 🎵

At Our Free Family Concerts **EVERYONE Sings!**

by Priscilla March, Alto I

Where in Massachusetts could you find a toad in a yellow speedster, a house overrun with weasels, and a bunch of field mice singing Christmas carols... not to mention a farm housing elephants, seals, and pigs? Where else but at Cantemus' annual free Family Concerts!

(cont. next page)



Massachusetts Cultural Council

Cantemus is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency, and by grants from the Beverly, Gloucester, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich, and Newburyport Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the MCC.

What Is Cantemus?

Founded in 1982, Cantemus (Latin for "Let us sing") is a nonprofit organization composed of 35 voices from across the North Shore of Massachusetts. 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.

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Marlene Switzer
Non-Singing

Deb Twining
At Large

John Hoffacker
Advisor

Cantemus News

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programs are available.



Nat Pulsifer, playing a grumpy Mr. Badger at Cantemus' free Family Concerts in February.

Building a tradition of service to the community, Cantemus staged its third free Family Concert on Saturday, February 7 before an audience of over 300 listeners, both young and not-so-young. Cantemus successfully doubled its Family Concert reach this year by expanding to two

venues in two North Shore towns. In the morning, the performance took place in Beverly's First Parish Church and, in the afternoon, Cantemus went to Gloucester to again perform for free in Gloucester's historic City Hall.

Tailoring the concert especially to the younger members of our communities, Cantemus performed *The Wind in the Willows*, a story in song from the book by Kenneth Grahame with music by John Rutter, including colorful props, sound effects, and costumes. Accompanying the chorus was an orchestra comprised of Robert Littlefield, keyboards; Eileen Yarrison, flute; Audrey Markowitz, oboe; Pascale Delache-Feldman, bass; and Richard Fish, percussion. Of course, the best part of family music is singing together, and the audiences did their part by joining in with family-favorite sing-alongs, including a rousing "Old MacDonald" with a striking mix of farm animals.

Music Director John Hoffacker explained that free Family Concerts let Cantemus introduce newcomers to the joys of choral music. "We want audiences to experience the feeling of community that comes with joining others in song. By sparking an interest in choral singing in the very youngest of our neighbors, we hope to be a catalyst for their further explorations into music. Even the parents who bring their kids to our concerts can be surprised by the joy of singing and motivated to build more music into their lives. By bringing Cantemus to these

communities at a time and price that's truly unbeatable, that's our hope."

Cantemus gratefully acknowledges Family Concert support from an Alfred Nash Patterson Grant from Choral Arts New England, and special grants from Henry's Market of North Beverly and Gorton's Seafoods of Gloucester. The Massachusetts Cultural Council and the Cultural Councils of Beverly, Gloucester, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich and Newburyport also helped to make these concerts possible. 🎵

Premiere to Highlight "Fascinating Rhythm" in June



Michael Weinstein-Reiman, winner of Cantemus' composition competition. The chorus will premiere his work "La Musique" at its June 5 concert.

What do a Monteverdi madrigal, "Rialto Ripples," and a modern Gospel barn-burner have in common?

Rhythm! It starts your toes to tapping, it breathes excitement into your spirit, it's fun and beautiful all at once.

This June, Cantemus uncorks a wonderful concoction of choral showpieces we call "Fascinating Rhythm: Madrigals, Spirituals, Gospel, and Gershwin." You'll hear Italian madrigals and contemporary partsongs, the oldest spirituals and modern Gospel numbers, and your favorite selections from the pen of George Gershwin.

An added treat will be the premiere of "La Musique," by Michael Weinstein-Reiman from Brandeis University, winner of a composition competition sponsored by Cantemus in celebration of its 20th season. From Music Director John Hoffacker: "La Musique," based on a poem by Beaudelaire, is remarkable. It sings in the same rhythm of the poem – not merely with the syllables' accents, but with the feeling behind the words. A sublime little work."

What better way to swing into summer? Please join us on June 5! 🎵

Look Ahead ▶▶▶

and reserve this date for

**CANTEMUS'
JUNE CONCERT!**

**Fascinating Rhythm:
Madrigals, Spirituals,
Gospel & Gershwin**

**Saturday, June 5, 2004
7:30 p.m.**

Christ Church
of Hamilton and Wenham
149 Asbury Street
Hamilton, MA

It's So Easy to Save on Tickets!

Why not get your Cantemus tickets at a discount? We offer many ways to obtain discounted advance tickets to our concerts. To receive advance tickets by mail, simply write your ticket request and send it with your check (made out to "Cantemus") to Cantemus Tickets-by-Mail, c/o 54 Ober St., Beverly, MA 01915. For Cantemus' April 17-18th concerts, orders must be received by April 12, 2004; late-request tickets will be held at the door. Tickets-by-Mail are sold at the advance-priced rate of \$15 (adults) and \$10 (seniors). And don't forget that students aged 21 and under are always admitted free to our concerts!

Please visit our ticket outlets as well for discounted tickets: The Book Shop in Beverly Farms, Nazir's Fine Jewelry in Hamilton, Ipswich Shellfish Fish Market, and Newburyport Printmaker in Newburyport.

If you haven't managed to get tickets in advance, you can still take advantage of savings at the door. With your WGBH Membership Card, you can get a \$20 ticket for \$18. By showing your AAA card, you can receive tickets at 25% off. Or, show us your Essex Preferred Card and buy one ticket and get one free! 🎵



Cantemus Order/Contribution Form

This year, our annual budget is over \$40,000, including \$5,700 for our 15-piece string orchestra in April. In addition to ticket sales, we depend on the generosity of community members, foundations and Cultural Councils to balance our budget. Will you help us today by making a tax-exempt donation to Cantemus? All donations are fully tax-deductible.

- I am enclosing my tax-deductible contribution of _____.
- I'd like to have my name added to the Cantemus mailing list.
- Please add my friend (name/address written below) to the Cantemus mailing list.
- I'm interested in sponsoring a performance of a specific work(s). Please describe:

- I'd like to purchase ____ (number) of the Cantemus **"Joy Shall be Yours"** CD (\$10 per CD or two for \$15, plus \$2.50 shipping per order).

Total amount enclosed: _____

Name: _____			
Address: _____			
City: _____	State: _____	Zip: _____	
Phone: (_____) _____	E-Mail: _____		



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Small Chorus. Grand Sound.

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Cantemus
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Ipswich, MA
01938



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Cantemus Sponsors Celebration of Young Voices with “Best of the Best” Concert

by Bettina Turner, Soprano II

Cantemus’ fourth annual “Best of the Best” high school chorus invitational concert will take place at Newburyport High School on Wednesday, April 7, at 7:30 PM. This year, the following chamber choruses are participating in this celebration of young voices:

- The Lawrence Girls’ Ensemble from Lawrence High School
- The Varsity Choir from Newburyport High School
- Pingree A Cappella from the Pingree School in Hamilton
- The Women’s Select Choir from Triton Regional High School, Byfield
- The Waring Madrigals from the Waring School, Beverly

The Lawrence Girls’ Ensemble has been in existence for 15 years. The auditioned group under the direction of Nancy McGhee has toured Ireland, England, and Rome.

Newburyport High School’s Varsity Choir under the direction of Evelyn Mann has been in existence for over 30 years. Formerly known as the “Chosen Few,” they perform regularly at nursing homes and for senior citizen groups around the community. The group has performed at the State House in Boston and at the White House.

Pingree A Cappella consists of 15 young singers. Their director, Monica Brile, says: “The Best of the Best performance occurs on the final day of a music exchange program that we have created with a school in England. We

will spend a week in March in County Durham, and their students will return to visit us in the first week of April.”

With 41 members, the Triton group, under the direction of Bob Lathrop, is the largest of the featured ensembles. According to its director, it was started in response to the number of qualified female singers who auditioned for the school’s 16-voice mixed Jazz Choir. Last year the Select Choir received a “superior” rating at the MICCA choral festival and was invited to perform in a showcase concert at Tanglewood.

This will be the Waring Madrigals’ second appearance at a Best of the Best concert. “The kids have a fair amount of input on the repertoire we choose,” says director Shaylor Lindsay, “and we try to include a wide range of styles each year. The group has been around for about 20 years.”

Each of the groups will perform on its own, as will Cantemus, and all singers will join together side by side for a grand finale.

“I am looking forward to getting together with these fantastic young singers,” said Cantemus Music Director John Hoffacker. “Their passion and enthusiasm for music make the whole room tremble with excitement. The concert is always a thrill for everyone involved.”

Cantemus singer Dorothy Kerper Monnelly, who is helping organize the event, adds her perspective: “This unique outreach program demonstrates a real commitment to mentoring young singers and creating a special opportunity for them to perform for each other and to share the stage with us.”

For more information about the “Best of the Best” and Cantemus’ other upcoming performances, visit www.cantemus.org. 