

CANTEMUS NEWS

Cantemus Chamber Chorus Semi-annual Newsletter

Vol. 6 / No. 2 • November 2004



CANTEMUS
Small Chorus, Grand Sound.

Cantemus Chamber Chorus

Sopranos
Kristine Buckridge
Claire Cayot
Katy Fickenwirth
Donna Gale
Janet Glasser
Elaine Gomperts
Anne Maguire
Pamela Morris
Susan Nash
Bettina Turner

Altos
Kristine Harris
Elizabeth Lebel
Pat Lowery Collins
Priscilla March
Dorothy Monnelly
Chris Reif
Ann Tucker
Debby Twining
Betsy Vicksell
Nancy Weinberg

Tenors
Chris Barker
Jamie Cabot
Gary Freeman
Mark Pierce

Basses
Richard Blumenscheid
Bill Dowdall
David Geikie
Doug Guy
Nat Pulsifer
Richard Salandrea
Justin Turner
Conrad Willeman

Interim Music Director
Gary Wood

Accompanist
Robert Littlefield

Cantemus Chamber Chorus
P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA 01938

Toll free information
1-888-CHORUS-1

www.cantemus.org

A Celtic Christmas

by Gary Wood, Interim Music Director



Gary Wood

“A Celtic Christmas” is Cantemus’ theme for the season, as our December concerts’ featured composers were raised in and around the Celtic traditions, and our repertoire selections reflect these influences.

We begin the program with extended works for chorus with harp, and chorus with organ, starting with the dance-like “Gabriel’s Message” by Stephen Paulus and concluding the first half with Benjamin Britten’s “Ceremony of Carols” featuring the women of Cantemus and our guest harpist Anna Solovieva. Between these beautiful works, with Robert Littlefield at the organ, the chorus will sing Gerald Finzi’s “Magnificat,” which offers a lyrical approach combined with contrapuntal writing and terrific drama.

The second half includes several carols linked with the lands of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, along with a reading of Dylan Thomas’ delightful “A Child’s Christmas in Wales,” an evocative narrative read for us by Thomas Stumpf. Balancing the women’s voices of Britten’s “Ceremony,” the tenors and basses of Cantemus will sing carols arranged by Donald Campfield. Carols for keyboard and chorus by John Rutter will also be featured, along with a cappella settings of “Coventry Carol,” “A Welsh Lullaby,” and “Silent Night.”

This concert will offer aural delights for everyone. We look forward to sharing the richness of the season in the variety of Celtic and other texts, tunes, and harmonies, and in the instrumental and choral timbres that resonate throughout this music of celebration and joy. Please join us for “A Celtic Christmas” in December. 🎵

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE A Celtic Christmas

Saturday, December 4, 7:30 p.m.

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

Sunday, December 5, 4:00 p.m.

Central Congregational Church, corner of
Pleasant & Titcomb Sts., Newburyport, MA

Cantemus Welcomes Gary Wood As Interim Music Director

As the holiday music season gets underway, Cantemus enthusiastically welcomes Gary Wood to the podium as interim Music Director. Gary is currently chair of the Salem State College Music Department, and, as assistant professor, teaches primarily in the choral/vocal curriculum. In addition to his work at Salem State, he has conducted the Senior and Junior Choirs at First Church in Wenham since 1996. Previously, he taught for six years at Davis & Elkins College in West Virginia. He also plays jazz piano, studies jazz guitar, and enjoys golf.

A native of Missouri, Gary received his Master of Sacred Music degree from Southern Methodist University and his Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

(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 32 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.

Board of Directors 2004-2005

Elaine Gomperts
President

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Elizabeth Lebel
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Priscilla March
At Large

Susan Nash
At Large

Marlene Switzer
Non-singing

Deb Twining
At Large

Conrad Willeman
At Large

Gary Wood
Advisor

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All major concerts are handicapped accessible.



Large print concert programs are available at all major concerts.

"The arts and music, in general, and choral music, in particular, make a vital contribution to the quality of people's lives," says Gary. "In a society that seems to value power, riches, and fun, it is imperative that artists and arts educators emphasize the empowerment, enrichment, and true joy that accompany our involvement in the arts. It is the redemptive powers of musical activity which underline my work as a conductor and educator."

About his being named interim Music Director of Cantemus, Gary says, "I am very pleased to have this opportunity with Cantemus, with its distinguished history of over 20 years. As a contributing member to the cultural life of the North Shore, Cantemus celebrates the choral art and the humanity of making music with one another. The enthusiasm and dedication of these singers is outstanding, and I look forward to our musical growth together in the coming months." 🎵

Exquisite Music at Exquisite Savings

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 18 Turkey Shore Rd., Ipswich, MA 01938. For Cantemus' December 4th and 5th concerts, orders must be received by November 29, 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. By showing your AAA card, your Greater Boston Choral Consortium VIP card, or your WGBH Membership card, you can save 25 percent on admission. Or, show us your Essex Preferred card and buy one ticket and get one free! 🎵

From the President

by Elaine Gomperts, Soprano 2
Cantemus Board President



Elaine Gomperts

I hope, like the singers of Cantemus, you are looking forward to another new season of beautiful music. We have welcomed several new talented singers to our group and have already been working hard to prepare for our fall and December performances, even as we've undergone some dramatic changes.

This summer, we learned that our beloved conductor of over a decade, John Hoffacker, would be leaving us to move to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. In a farewell letter to Cantemus singers, John wrote, "You have been there to pioneer new concepts for chamber choirs... You have thrilled me to my shoes in every performance. Your commitment to beauty and communication have enfolded our communities in loveliness. Your good humor, great skill, and dedication in every rehearsal inspire me and everyone around you. This is a wonderful chorus, and I know its greatest triumphs are still ahead." Our best wishes go out to John and his family as they venture to Minnesota to start a new chapter in their lives.

A few weeks before the fall term started, the board started a search for an interim Music Director and, in early September, invited Gary Wood from Salem State to lead us in preparing a great December concert program titled "A Celtic Christmas." To help in the process of looking for a permanent Music Director, the board has approved a new vision statement developed by a committee formed to look at the direction Cantemus wants to go in the future. A Music Director search committee has started the process of seeking candidates. We look forward to announcing the name of the permanent Music Director for Cantemus Chamber Chorus in the near future.

In the meantime, we eagerly anticipate seeing *you* in the audience for our December concerts that promise to set the stage for a sparkling holiday season! 🎵

Cantemus Sponsors Fifth Annual High School Showcase Concert

by Bettina Turner, Soprano 2

As this issue goes to press, the Cantemus-sponsored annual showcase of select high school choruses is being planned. The “Best of the Best” concert will take place at Beverly High School on Wednesday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m.

Participants this year: Beverly High School Vocal Ensemble (Carolyn Pilanen, director); Marblehead High School Jewel Tones (Amanda Roeder, director); Rockport High School Madrigal Chorus (Patricia Pike, director); and St. John’s Preparatory School Travel Choir (Michael Hamill, director).

Each of the choruses will perform separately. Cantemus will also perform. As in previous years, at the end of the evening, singers from all high school groups and from Cantemus will perform jointly in a rousing finale.

This is the first time Cantemus welcomes Rockport’s and Marblehead’s choruses to the Best of the Best. Patricia Pike, director of Rockport’s Madrigal Chorus, which sings 17th- and 18th-century madrigals as well as jazz and folk arrangements, said, “We come delighted to share our music as well as learn about different styles and repertoires from other choruses.” Amanda Roeder, director of the

Marblehead Jewel Tones, said, “We are excited for the opportunity to hear other local groups and to witness the broad range of a cappella music that is available to high school singers.” The Jewel Tones sing a cappella pop arrangements from the last four decades.

This collaborative concert of exuberant young singers performing for each other has become an annual tradition and treats the audience to a wide range of styles and repertoire. Many of the groups who have participated over the years sing regularly at community events, but they rarely get to listen to each other in a non-competitive environment. Cantemus members are excited to share their love of choral music with these young singers on November 3. 🎵

Look Ahead ➤ ➤ ➤

and reserve your date to enjoy
CANTEMUS’ MAY CONCERTS!

Saturday, May 7, 7:30 p.m.

Christ Church of Hamilton and Wenham
149 Asbury St., Hamilton, MA

Sunday, May 8, 4:00 p.m.

Central Congregational Church
Corner of Pleasant & Titcomb Sts., Newburyport, MA



CANTEMUS
Small Chorus, Grand Sound.

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

Cantemus
P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA
01938

Cantemus Order/Contribution Form

This year, our annual budget is nearly \$38,000. 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: _____



P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA 01938

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Cantemus Medley!

While sharing their talents with Cantemus, our singers also make an impact elsewhere in the arts community and in their various chosen vocations. Here's a recent sampling:

▲ In July, altos **Deb Twining** and **Betsy Lebel**, bass **Bill Dowdall**, and soprano **Susan Nash** spent a week at the Berkshire Choral Festival in Sheffield, MA. Morning rehearsals were followed by noontime classes in music theory, history, or performance. After free afternoons, participants enjoyed pre-dinner talks and faculty concerts, and then attended evening rehearsals. (Imagine singing five hours a day for six days!) The climax came on Saturday night: 237 voices performed Beethoven's Mass in C and the Duruflé Requiem accompanied by the Springfield Symphony and conducted by Donald McCullough, of The Master Chorale of Washington, D.C. For more information, see the BCF web site (www.choralfest.org). This organization provides a fabulous singing experience for more than 1,000 people every year. Just ask Deb (this was her 10th year) and Bill (he met his wife there!).

▲ Author and Cantemus alto **Pat Lowery Collins** recently received the Boston Author's Club Julia Ward Howe Award for the best children's book of 2004. The award is for *The Fattening Hut*, a young adult novel published by the children's division of Houghton Mifflin. *The Fattening Hut* was also chosen for the Booksense 76 list for 2003-2004. The book tells the story of a young girl who resists the traditions of her tribe and fights to become educated and free. What reviewers have said: "(the book is) powerful and unique..." "so powerfully

written that it seems to be not just for this character, but for a tribe, a gender, a race"... and "the impact of each word and the tempo of the narrative drive readers on." For more on this and other of Pat's works, see www.patlowerycollins.com.



Justin and Bettina Turner

▲ One of Cantemus' new basses, **Justin Turner**, 16, also happens to be the son of soprano **Bettina Turner**. Justin, a junior at Newburyport High School, has been singing with the school's choir and select choir for the past two years, as well as in his church and

in school musicals. He enjoyed the challenge of auditioning for an "adult group" like Cantemus and says he was happily surprised and proud to be invited to join. His mother is "thrilled to share my love of singing with my son. It's unusual for teenagers to want to join in activities with their parents and it's a great opportunity for us to spend time together. The main challenge so far has been to fit Justin with a tuxedo for his lanky frame!"

▲ Cantemus bass **Richard Salandrea**, soprano **Susan Nash** and tenor **Tim Bakland** (on sabbatical this semester) sang in the octet chorus of Mozart's "La clemenza di Tito," performed September 17 and 19 by Prism Opera (www.prismopera.org), in a new English translation by, and under the artistic direction of, Thomas Stumpf. Thomas will perform with Cantemus in December, reading "A Child's Christmas in Wales." 🎵