

cantemusnews

Cantemus Chamber Chorus Biannual Newsletter

Vol. 1/ No. 1 • October 1999-2000



CANTEMUS
Small Chorus, Grand Sound.

**Cantemus
Chamber Chorus
1999-2000 Season**

Music Director
John Hoffacker

Accompanist
Robert Littlefield

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

Altos
Peter B. Hoyt
Dorothy Monnelly
Robin Moore
Mary C. O'Donnell
Christine Reif
Marilyn A. Shepard
Lesli Suggs Todd
Debby Twining
Nancy Weinberg

Tenors
Chris Barker
Jamie Cabot
Gary Freeman
Walter F. Fuller
Orville Giddings
J. Douglas Guy
Todd Herrmann

Basses
Bill Barron
Jim Berry
Richard Blumenscheid
Phil Bouldin
Bob Chase
Bill Effner
Bill Gelwick
Nathaniel Pulsifer

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

Toll free information
1-888-CHORUS-1

Cantemus Heralds the Holidays on December 4th and 5th



The Cantemus Chamber Chorus

photo by: Dorothy Kerper Monnelly

Cantemus begins its 17th season on the first weekend of December 1999 with a pair of holiday concerts programmed and conducted by Music Director John Hoffacker. The North Shore's virtuoso chamber chorus presents *Here Come the Holidays!*, a program of holiday music that spans the centuries and the globe.

The program opens with British composer Benjamin Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, a lovely setting of nine Old English carols arranged for sopranos, altos, and harp. Following this piece, the men of Cantemus conjure the spirit of winter celebration with *Hac in anni janua* and the celebrated *Ave Maria* of Franz Biebl.

The program continues its exploration of the diversity of Christmas celebrations around the world. From the great Lutheran tradition comes Johann Sebastian Bach's exquisite double-chorus motet *Komm, Jesu, komm*, performed in German. *Three Cradle Songs* by contemporary American composer Steven Stucky draw on the languages and traditions of Brazil, Poland, and Tobago. Arrangements of the French carol *Il est né*, the English *Holly Carol*, and Randall Stroope's setting of Scottish poet Kenneth Grahame's *Joy Shall Be Yours in the Morning* provide a more traditional continental flavor. Rounding off the program, Cantemus performs a series of popular Christmas tunes in lively contemporary

arrangements, including *Jingle Bells*, *Deck the Halls*, and Mel Tormé's *Christmas Song*.

Here Come the Holidays! is scheduled for performance at Christ Church in Hamilton on Saturday, December 4th, at 8 p.m. and at the Central Congregational Church in Newburyport at 4 p.m. on Sunday, December 5th. Admission is \$14 for adults and \$12 for seniors; students 18 and under are free. Advanced sale purchases are discounted \$2. Tickets are available at the Book Shop of Beverly Farms, Hobson Gallery in Ipswich, Nazir's Fine Jewelers in Hamilton, and the Newburyport Printmaker. Both concerts are wheelchair-accessible. As always, concert-goers are invited for refreshments at a post-concert reception. For more information, call toll free 1-888-CHORUS-1.

John Hoffacker has served as Music Director of Cantemus since 1993, establishing the high standard of musicianship that is the guiding principle of this chamber chorus.

Adventurous in his programming, uncompromising in his dedication to quality, deeply knowledgeable of the literature, and exuberant in the process of music-making, he brings extraordinary expertise, energy and élan to his conducting. The recipient of the American Choral Foundation's award for scholarship and performance of madrigals in 1988, Mr. Hoffacker holds a doctorate in conducting from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. and has served in the past as director of choral activities at Georgia Southern University, Midwestern State University, Pingree School, Christ Church Hamilton, and Fitchburg State College.



THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
A state agency supporting the arts, humanities and sciences which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

*Cantemus is supported in part by the
Massachusetts Cultural Council.*

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. 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 1999-2000

Christopher C. Barker,
President

Ruth Berry, Vice President

Jim Berry, Secretary

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Music Director

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Vol.1, No. 1
October 1999

Editor:

J. Douglas Guy

Photo Credits:

- Dorothy Kerper Monnelly
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Graphic Design:

Sarah Meltzer Design

Conductor's Notes



by John Hoffacker

One of the pieces on our holiday concert reminds me of Grapevine Road in Wenham. The melodic lines of Bach's great motet *Komm, Jesu, komm* wind around and around, taking you from one beautiful scene to another, always changing and always lovely. But this motet is more than beautiful, as with most of Bach's music. The meaning of the text inspires its structure and composition in profound ways.

We're very fortunate in Cantemus to be able to bring you the kind of glorious music that can be enjoyed on so many levels. This season's holiday concert features the innocent exuberance of Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, for treble voices and harp, and the sonorous *Ave Maria* of Franz Biebl. Also, you'll hear sparkling arrangements of some seasonal carols, and three very special *Cradle Songs* by Steven Stucky.

This past summer, we had a chance to meet some of the wonderful people who donated to our annual campaign. Nan and George Mathey of Ipswich hosted a lovely reception at their beautiful Argilla Road home for the choir and donors; there was singing, laughing, and even a visit from a deer! Thanks, friends.

It's great to meet the people we sing for. We enjoy getting together Tuesday nights to prepare this music for you, and we love to see the expressions on your faces when the concert is really clicking! The spirit behind the music is what makes our community so wonderful, and we are grateful to have you to share it with us.

Featured Composers: Bach, Stucky & Britten

Hard-working, prolific, renowned as an organist but neglected as a composer, **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) had a life filled with activities sublime and mundane: parenting, teaching, conducting and performing in his capacity as Cantor of St. Thomas and St. Nicholas in Leipzig. This included preparing his young charges, the boys of the famed *Thomanerchor*, to sing at funerals. Normally this required selection of existing hymns and motets, but whenever the family of the bereaved wished to commission a new work, Bach was expected to compose, rehearse and perform a new motet in very short time.

The motet *Komm, Jesu, komm* (BWV229), dating from between 1723 and 1734, is based on stanzas of a funeral

hymn written by Paul Thymich on occasion of the death of a Rector of St. Thomas School. It is in many respects the most intimate motet written by Bach, a deeply emotional expression of longings for death rooted in sincere faith and firm conviction in life everlasting.

Written in eight parts for double chorus, the motet demonstrates an extraordinary mastery of counterpoint and haunting melodic exposition that derive from both his faith and the traditions of the German Lutheran chorale.

Born in 1949, **Steven Stucky** is one of the leading American composers of his generation. Raised in Kansas and Texas, Stucky received his musical education at Baylor and Cornell, taught composition at Lawrence University, and since 1980 has been professor of music and artistic director of Ensemble X at Cornell University. Active as a teacher, lecturer, writer and conductor, Stucky composes for orchestra and for chorus. His music is known for its beauty of sound, the imaginative use of color, clarity of large-scale form, and his ability to communicate with the audience without sacrificing complexity, artistic

(continued next page)



Johann Sebastian Bach memorial statue at St. Thomas Church, Leipzig, Germany

photo by: J. Douglas Guy



Cantemus Goes Online!

What's the latest on Cantemus' current season? Who's singing in the tenor section this year? How do I get to the concert venues? How do I get tickets? Can I purchase a recording? Answers to these questions and a lot more can be found on the new Cantemus website, www.cantemus.org Log on, look around, and let us know what you think of our new home in cyberspace.

integrity, or technical finesse. His *Cradle Songs* are a set of three lullabies taken from Brazilian, Polish and Tobagoan sources and arranged for a cappella chorus.

One of the most tradition-conscious of all British composers, **Benjamin Britten** (1913-1976) has always been a master of transforming historic English music into something both appealing and innovatively new. Britten demonstrates this facility with his *Ceremony of Carols*, written in 1942 at the age of 29, drawing on medieval English carols as well as poems by James, John and Robert Wedderburn, Robert Southwell, and William Cornish. Composed expressly for treble voices accompanied by harp, it frames a set of ancient carols with a procession and recession, and includes an interlude for solo harp. Both musically challenging and accessible, the work for has become a contemporary classic and enjoys great popularity with audiences.

A Message from Our President

by Christopher C. Barker

What an exciting time of year this is! Like students returning to campus after a summer of relaxation, Cantemus Chamber Chorus has recently regrouped for the 1999-2000 season. I cannot help but reflect on the words of one of our incoming freshmen who described his interview with our distinguished Dean of Admissions, Dr. Hoffacker. "That was some audition—John took my voice to places it has never been before." Those words pretty much summarize my aspirations for our

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What Can I Do?

Everyone plays a part in keeping alive the spirit and culture of our communities. Singers in Cantemus gather on Tuesday nights to prepare glorious concerts. Kids of all ages take piano and dance lessons. Artisans work hard on their crafts and display them at fairs. Poets listen to the rain and hear a metaphor for a broken heart. The arts are all around us.

You can play a major role, too. Last year, our supporters contributed more than \$5,000 to help Cantemus rent rehearsal space and present in two beautiful venues a concert season that filled the heart and healed the soul.

The personal, corporate, and foundation contributions that we receive during our annual fund-raising campaign help to keep our ticket prices low, so that families can enjoy our concerts together. It also enables us to continue to build our educational outreach programs, encouraging more people to join you in enjoying this kind of music!

Use the convenient form below to communicate with us. Send in your tax-deductible contribution today. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or be kept up-to-date by e-mail, we're happy to add your name to our lists. If you want to volunteer your services in any way, we welcome your help. No matter how you participate, you'll be doing your part to keep the arts alive!

Preview 4 Vorschau 4 Exhibition préalable

April 2000:

*Works in English, German, and French by
Dowland, Mendelssohn, and Debussy
highlight the Cantemus Spring 2000 program.*

Look for details in the next edition of cantemusicnews!



CANTEMUS
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Mail to:

P.O. Box 748
Ipswich, MA
01938

- I'd like my name added to the Cantemus mailing list.
- I'd like to get e-mail about Cantemus concerts and activities.
- I'd like to help Cantemus by volunteering to _____
- I'd like to submit the enclosed tax-deductible contribution for \$ _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ E-Mail: _____





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P.O. Box 784
Ipswich, MA 01938

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organization this year. As you well know, John Frederic Hoffacker is a man of many letters (21 to be exact), who, in addition to his duties as Dean of Admissions, serves as the Chairman of our Music Department as well as Professor of Linguistics and Mathematics. By his own admission (pun intended), he states, "That's why you pay me the big bucks." During our Tuesday evening classes, the good professor drills us on our diction of French, Polish, and German. Language Lab is brought to a close with a hearty "Das ist gut!" Then it's on to Math 101 where we are to develop a mastery of the 7/8 time signature. All of this so that we may attain new levels of artistic achievement.

In between Tuesday classes, we explore new-found territories through our elective course work: the publishing of our inaugural edition of *cantemusnews*, the creation of our web site www.cantemus.org, and the pressing of our first CD recording.

As is true with any institution of higher learning, our very existence is dependent not only on student tuition, a.k.a. membership dues, but also the generosity of parents, alumni, and members of the community-at-large. We are most grateful for your bountiful gifts of last year that have made this year's activities possible. And we eagerly anticipate innovative programming of next year's curriculum with funding that we receive from our many loyal supporters this year.

The school bell has rung, the doors have been flung wide open, and classes for the new year have begun. Come join the pomp and circumstance of Cantemus' 1999-2000 season as we journey with you to new horizons!

Meet the Section

Cantemus Sopranos



Claire M. Cayot, Newburyport • Profession: middle school music teacher • Hobbies: swimming, walking, XC skiing • CD recommendation: Dale Warland Singers: *Blue Wheat*

Donna Gale, Hamilton • Profession: school psychologist • Hobbies: singing, reading, collecting teddy bears, traveling

Patty Kennedy, Marblehead • Profession: research operations manager in marketing/consulting firm • Hobbies: sailing, singing, reading, musicals • CD recommendations: Renee Fleming: *Beautiful* and Dawn Upshaw: *Songs from Rogers & Hart*

Pamela J. Morris, Beverly • Profession: homemaker • Hobbies: swimming, singing, painting

Susan Nash, West Newbury • Profession: copyeditor/writer for Hasbro Games • Hobbies: gardening, travel, music