



NEW YORK
CHORAL CONSORTIUM

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The BIG SING! Or – There Are HOW Many Choruses in New York City??

(Among other things, this is an announcement of “The BIG SING,” a free event taking place on JUNE 13, 2016. If you’d like to skip to the event specifics, scroll down or click [here](#) -)

Ahem...

*Brooklyn Youth Chorus
C4 – Choral Composers/Conductor Collective
Oratorio Society of New York
Peace of Heart Choir
Renaissance Street Singers
TENET
Youth Pride Chorus*

What is this – a sampling of the kinds of groups that make New York the cultural mecca that it is?

Yes, indeed – but the much more interesting answer is that these six groups represent only 10% of the membership of the **New York Choral Consortium**, a collective of 65 professional, amateur, and pro-am member choruses that comprise around 2,500 singers from throughout the five boroughs of New York City. And that is not even every chorus in NYC.

Is choral singing still popular in this digital age?

According to the 2009 “Chorus Impact Study” by Chorus America, roughly 1 in 5 Americans participates in a chorus. It’s the most popular way in which Americans engage with classical music.

What makes the New York choral scene special – is it what I’d think?

Yes it is! What makes the New York choral landscape unique is the extraordinary variety of specializations, missions, and artistic configurations found within the NYCC membership. There are the established and long-standing avocational groups such as The Desoff Choirs and New York Choral Society; and acclaimed professional groups such as TENET and Musica Sacra, but then there are also:

Renaissance Street Singers –singing 15th- and 16th-century music *a cappella* on the sidewalks and in the public spaces of New York City since 1973

Youth Pride Chorus – “Youth Pride Chorus harnesses the power of the performing arts to galvanize lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and straight young people ages 13-22 as agents of change.”

Schola Cantorum on Hudson – pro-am ensemble focusing on audience-friendly programming of new music with a social justice message

...you can check out the entire membership of NYCC [here](#).

Why are you telling me about this now?

Because this spring and summer, **two big events and a major anniversary** put a spotlight on the vast crazy quilt that is the New York choral scene:

- **The centennial of the great conductor Robert Shaw**, who galvanized the art and standards of choral singing, on April 30 (celebrations include a Carnegie Hall concert and a documentary film)
- **“The BIG SING,” June 13, 2016** - An annual free event sponsored by the New York Choral Consortium, featuring 300+ singers performing with 10 conductors. **(See below!)**
- **World premiere of David Lang’s *the public domain*, August 13, 2016** - As described by Lincoln Center’s Mostly Mozart Festival: Celebrating Mostly Mozart’s special place in the hearts of New Yorkers, Lincoln Center has commissioned a major new work by Pulitzer Prize-winning and Academy Award-nominated composer David Lang. This new work, titled *the public domain*, will feature a chorus of up to 1,000 volunteer amateur and professional singers, recruited from all five boroughs of the city and the metro area, offering Festival newcomers and longstanding enthusiasts alike the opportunity to participate first-hand in this special anniversary season and make their singing debut at Lincoln Center. The new work—a joint project of David Lang and acclaimed British choral director Simon Halsey, who will lead the performance—will receive its world premiere outdoors at Lincoln Center on August 13. Logically enough, the New York Choral Consortium is being tapped for recruitment outreach within its vast membership of active choral singers, and for rehearsal leadership of this massive undertaking.

Besides “The BIG SING,” does the NYCC sponsor or participate in performances?

NYCC member singers will be joining in *the public domain*. And in 2013, Members of the New York Choral Consortium (so billed) joined Alan Gilbert and the New York Philharmonic for a performance (available on recording) of [Charles Ives's Symphony No. 4](#).

Tell me more about “The BIG SING” and the NYCC –

Happily! Here you go...

**NEW YORK CHORAL CONSORTIUM PRESENTS
“THE BIG SING”**

**A FREE EVENT FEATURING 300+ OF NEW YORK’S CHORAL SINGERS, 10
CONDUCTORS, AND CHORAL LEGEND ALICE PARKER
MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2016, AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

“The BIG SING” is an annual free massed singing event inaugurated in 2011 by the New York Choral Consortium as a way for New York choral singers to perform together, and to celebrate the beginning of the summer, a season active with regional choral workshops and festivals across the country. More than 300 singers usually attend, and the audience is invited to join in.

This year, on Monday, June 13, 2016, at 7:30 pm, “The BIG SING” gets Big-ger – by moving to the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, the largest cathedral in the world, with a program honoring two legendary figures in choral music: Robert Shaw, the centennial of whose birth occurs on April 30, and the beloved choral composer, conductor, and teacher Alice Parker, who turned 90 on December 16.

The music will include selections drawn from the “Centennial Choralfest” booklet that Robert Shaw prepared for the Carnegie Hall centennial in 1991. The booklet includes such choral favorites as “Dona nobis pacem” from Bach’s Mass in B Minor, the beloved central movement of Brahms’s *German Requiem*, “He Watching Over Israel” from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, and many more. And Alice Parker herself will be a special guest at the event, conducting a work of her own and reminiscing about Robert Shaw and their long association at The Juilliard School.

The event will be hosted by Kent Tritle, Director of Cathedral Music and Organist at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine as well as the music director of the Oratorio Society of New York and Musica Sacra, and will feature 10 conductors who are music directors of NYCC member groups: NYCC Chair Deborah Simpkin King, Marina Alexander, Phillip Cheah, John Devries, Patrick Gardiner, Alistair Hamilton, David Hayes, John Maclay, Malcolm Merriweather, Ronnie Oliver, and Mark Shapiro.

New York Choral Consortium

The New York Choral Consortium, one of the first organizations of its kind in the country, is a membership organization composed of choruses that call New York City home, representing a diverse community of singers and choral organizations.

What would ultimately become the NYCC emerged in the early 1970s as informal gatherings of five or six conductors seeking to compare calendars and repertoire plans, seeking to avoid conflicts. Around 2003, at the time that the Carnegie Hall-New York Philharmonic merger was being discussed, the groups that performed at Carnegie got together out of concern for their main venue’s date availability being drastically reduced – and found that they had a lot to talk about beyond that.

The NYCC ultimately incorporated in 2010, as interest in choral advocacy and collegial collaborations grew. In the past five years, largely prompted by the visibility offered by “The BIG SING,” the organization’s membership has quadrupled.

Today, NYCC membership includes around 65 choruses, representing roughly 2500 singers from throughout the five boroughs, and serves as both a resource and a marketing arm for its members. Member organizations have access to strategy seminars, networking events, and social events that promote healthier choruses and a more vibrant choral community. The NYCC also supports a cooperative approach to promoting programming diversity in the city by publishing an internal programming calendar for future seasons. The NYCC publishes a choral calendar and distributes information on upcoming concerts of member organizations. www.newyorkchoralconsortium.org

Monday, June 13, 2016, at 7:30 pm
Cathedral of St. John the Divine

New York Choral Consortium presents
“The BIG SING”

Conductors:

Deborah Simpkin King, Chair of NYCC and Music Director of Schola Cantorum on Hudson

Marina Alexander, Richmond Choral Society

Phillip Cheah, Central City Chorus

John Devries, Canterbury Choral Society

Patrick Gardiner, Riverside Choral Society

Alistair Hamilton, New York Chamber Choirs

David Hayes, New York Choral Society

John Maclay, Choral Society of Grace Church

Malcolm Merriweather, West Village Chorale

Ronnie Oliver, Florilegium

Mark Shapiro, Cantori and Cecilia Chorus

Kent Tritle, host

Michael Sheetz, piano

James Wetzel, organ

Choral favorites including “Dona nobis pacem” from Bach’s Mass in B Minor, the central movement of Brahms’s *German Requiem*, “He Watching Over Israel” from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, and more. *Choral singers and audience members are invited to participate in this massed singing event!*

Admission: Free

For information, visit <http://www.newyorkchoralconsortium.com/#!the-big-sing/utiz5>

LEARN MORE:

New York Choral Consortium: www.newyorkchoralconsortium.org

Robert Shaw centennial: <http://robertshaw.website/>

Alice Parker: http://melodiousaccord.org/alice_parker

David Lang’s *the public domain*: <http://mostlymozart.org/thepublicdomain/>

April 21, 2016