Musical Director’s Report — Clara Longstreth

The forty-fifth season of New Amsterdam Singers was a great one. Here is a summary of notable elements:

- A large picture of the chorus headed a March calendar listing, calling NAS “adventurous and excellent” in the New York Times.
- We were invited to sing at a White House holiday party for the second time. (28 singers made the trip to Washington and sang beautifully.)
- The largest, best tenor section in the history of the chorus. (In our final concert I realized that the number of sopranos and alts was exactly the same as the number of tenors and basses!)
- We toured South Africa in July with 20 current singers and 14 alumni plus assorted groups, yielding a bus full of 51. Donna Zalichin and James Crowell worked with the tour company as tour managers, a huge job well done.

Now to a review of the concert season.

The December concert mixed the old (Bach, Brahms) and the new (Shatin, MacMillan). Randall Thompson occupied a space between old and new with a mature work, Antiphon, much less known than his Alleluia. The chamber chorus tackled a colorful work by Abbie Betinis, Mary and Gabriel, featuring the great sound of the marimba, played by old friend Bill Trigg.

The March program was especially rewarding and especially difficult. The Eastern European repertoire was beloved by singers and audience, and suited the chorus well, but the unfamiliar languages and less than perfectly comprehensible editions made the learning harder than it should have been. The Liszt and Eben pieces gave soloists from our ranks a chance to shine. A number of Hungarians in the audience were impressed and overjoyed to hear Bartok in his own language. The tenors and basses sounded beautiful, whether in poignant Kodaly or rousing Liszt.

Our “Premiere” program in May was full of music that was fun to sing—and was in English! Tempest, Travelers, Three Plums, Fantasy on La Rambla, all unforgettable, great pieces. Chamber chorus singers outdid themselves with Schuman’s Carols of Death and Bennett’s A Farewell to Arms, which featured a charismatic young cellist, Jay Campbell. Four composers attended the concert and spoke to the audience. We earned an excellent review from Anthony Tommasini of the New York Times for the second year in a row.

This year Robin Beckhard has been our chorus president, and she and our board had lots of good new ideas, and sound judgment. We were fortunate to have Max Blum with us for his second season, Pen Ying for her thirteenth, and Lauren Scott for her twelfth, in the assistant conductor, accompanist, and manager roles.

We celebrated the 45th year with a party in May featuring an historical video by Dana Crowell, and a new version of the Meet the Composers dinner.

All in all, a landmark season!

President’s Report — Robin Beckhard

The 2012-13 season, our 45th year under Clara’s inspiring direction, was a memorable and moving one for chorus members, audiences and friends, culminating in a remarkable tour to South Africa, as you’ll read in Ed Schultz’s evocative account.

For the March program of music by Eastern European composers, when Clara selected challenging repertoire in Hungarian, French, German, and Russian – lots of words, lots of unfamiliar sounds, all sung very fast! – we were grateful for the patient linguistic assistance of Vera Sziklai (Hungarian) and Tim DeVerdi (Russian), and proud when native speakers in the audience praised our pronunciation.

Three ambitious fundraising events sponsored by the Development Committee contributed healthy amounts to the chorus’s bottom line and provided enjoyment for many in the process. Mike Landy ran our successful second online auction in November-December. Diverse and appealing lots were contributed, bid on and distributed in time for holiday giving. Mike has also done a superb job of refreshing, editing and maintaining the NAS website, www.nasingers.org.

In January, a festive cabaret benefit was elegantly hosted by Bob Pietrzak in his 57th Street aerie. Kate Leahy, Rick Bonsall, Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff and I sang for an enthusiastic audience of nearly 100. Nina Rosenzweig coordinated the efforts of an industrious crew of chefs and servers; Jay Pott graciously hosted an encore performance. And in May, Dennis Goodenough and John Duncan organized a Meet the Composers/45th Anniversary gala, held in the majestic library of the New York Academy of Medicine. It was a treat and a privilege to perform premieres of so many new works in our May concert, and to have a chance to hear several of the composers speak about their creative process at this dinner. Kudos and thanks to the many people who were involved in these efforts. We will miss long-time singer and Development Committee Chair Ari Brose, who is moving back to Washington, DC.

Recognizing a need to enhance our efforts to bring more people to our concerts and more supporters into the fold generally, a Marketing Committee has been formed, with Kimberly Allan serving as Chair. Members of the Committee will focus on renewing and maintaining contact with NAS alumni and increasing our social media presence. Thanks to Ellen Stark for her great work this past year in reviving and breathing life into our Facebook page. “Like” it (www.facebook.com/NewAmsterdamSingers), if you haven’t already, to receive updates on chorus activities, concerts and benefits, see photos from our South Africa tour, and give us your feedback! Jessica Wong was a terrific editor of the NAS newsletter, GraceNotes, and Scott Gillam has continued in his greatly-appreciated role as Librarian and coordinator of our music rental program. We welcome Andy James to the Board.

The 2013-14 season will be an exciting one. Our December program will commemorate the centenary of Benjamin Britten’s birth. March will bring the familiar (Schütz and Brahms) and a striking piece of Benjamin Britten’s birth. March will bring the familiar (Schütz and Brahms) and a striking piece of the March program was especially rewarding and especially difficult. The Eastern European repertoire was beloved by singers and audience, and suited the chorus well, but the unfamiliar languages and less than perfectly comprehensible editions made the learning harder than it should have been. The Liszt and Eben pieces gave soloists from our ranks a chance to shine. A number of Hungarians in the audience were impressed and overjoyed to hear Bartok in his own language. The tenors and basses sounded beautiful, whether in poignant Kodaly or rousing Liszt.

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All in all, a landmark season!
Treasurer’s Report — James Crowell

What a difference a year makes! While ticket sales were down slightly, so were overall costs, including the extra money required to hire professional musicians. On the other hand, our three fundraisers combined net income broke the record for NAS, as did our individual and corporate contributions (thanks in part to a very generous anonymous donation). Since expenses tracked as expected, we were therefore able to realize a $21,178 net surplus for the year. It just goes to show that, while we continue to perform great music, it is really the generosity of our friends and families that keep the chorus solvent and I would like to thank everyone for their support.

The board unanimously voted to put $3,000 aside for next year’s marketing initiatives and the balance in our separate savings account that is accumulating funds to finance future orchestral collaborations. Other investment vehicles will be considered once interest rates improve.

Our NAS endowment currently totals $193,564 in a mix of stocks, bonds and cash. Its performance over the last year has been in step with the overall investment industry.

### Actual Income

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<td>Ticket and Other</td>
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### Actual Expenses

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<tr>
<td>Other Operating Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>$89,493</strong></td>
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**Aggregate Net Surplus/Loss** $341 $21,178

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**New Amsterdam Singers**

**2013–2014 Concert Series**

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**Calamity and Consolation:**

From Darkness to Light

A timeless requiem and a new classic from Finland.

- Heinrich Schütz  
  Musicalische Exequien
- Howard Skempton  
  We Who With Songs
- Ola Gjeilo  
  Liba Cantas
- Johannes Brahms  
  Warum ist das Lacht gegeben
- Jaakko Mäntyjärvi  
  Carmitis calamitatis mariitmae

The Church of the Holy Trinity

316 East 88th Street (between 1st and 2nd Avenues)

Friday, March 7, 2014 at 8 o’clock

Sunday, March 9, 2013 at 4 o’clock

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**A Ceremony of Britten — Carols, Hymns, and Lullabies**

We Celebrate Britten’s Hundredth Birthday and Honor the Season.

- Benjamin Britten  
  A.M.D.G. (Ad majorem Dei gloriam)
- Benjamin Britten  
  Prayer I, Rosa Mystica, Heaven-Haven, O Deus, Ego Amo Te
- Benjamin Britten  
  A Wealden Trio

---

**Full Fathom Five!**

Shakespeare in Song

Composers from Many Lands in Love with the Bard.

- Knud Jeppesen  
  Four Shakespeare Songs
- Ralph Vaughan Williams  
  Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind
- Frank Martin  
  O Mistress Mine

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**Saint Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church**

552 West End Avenue (at 87th Street)

Thursday, May 22, 2014 at 8 p.m.
UP FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD!

Travelling to South Africa conjures up the fancy of finding oneself standing on the Cape of Good Hope – upside down. If that happened we didn’t notice, but upside down is an apt metaphor for many experiences during the tour. Outed information, ideas, and imaginary notions would be turned head over heel as we journeyed 17 magical days through a familiar, but at bottom (pun intended), unknown part of the world. Come along . . .

First some backstory. Because NAS hack-burnered touring after 2008’s financial finger in the eye (save for a small and brief tour to Cuba in 2010), and because South Africa loomed as a possible destination, the response was swift. NASers – current and alumni, singers and groupies -- from Hawaii, Germany, France, and California as well as the Right Coast – all drawn by the lure of a unique and unfamiliar part of the world. Come along . . .

As we prepared, the traditional NAS Head-Count security check -- while James took command of troop movements overall strategic operations – multiple, complex and shift material; but we also saw many simple, sturdy and colorful homes of wood or cement, often with one-car garages. Apartheid is gone and poverty clings but is being nudged.

On the other hand, downtown business areas in Cape Town struck us with their ordinariness – could be anywhere in the world -- save for the oddly empty commercial streets and the shops that close at 3pm on weekends. Also the tall white walls embracing homes in upscale residential neighborhoods hinted of a danger we never saw.

We are living a charmed life here on tour, guided by a knowledgeable, soft-spoken Afrikaans gentleman with deceptively charm, Dries (trees with a D) de Bruyn. We are welcomed with open arms – literally – everywhere we go. After all, we came to share the wonder of music with people whose own music we hear first in the cadences and lilt of the languages they speak. There are eleven official languages in South Africa and music spills from each -- in seductive rhythms and ear-catching sounds.

For a nation repressed under Apartheid for five decades, a wicked sense of humor thrives. We got our first glimpses in signs we passed on the road. To wit: “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” which turned out to be a gigantic catering hall that we dined at after one concert; an enterprise that could surprise H.B. Stowe. Another corner turned up “Jungle Tots childcare;” yet another “Arthur Ashe Tennis Courts.” But the hands-down winner was a dessert item on a restaurant menu: “Chocolate Orgasms.” Your reporter has no idea how many were ordered or by whom.

Our visit to Robben Island, the prison in which Mandela was confined for 18 years but which failed to trap his spirit among the ramshackle dwellings are equally rickety barber shops, funeral parlors, auto repair, and “back” shops (small retail food stores), signaling a lively everyday community life. Of course, we realized through our surprise, lives are being lived here.

In our travels to come we would see other townships, among them in the world-famed Soweto (an acronym for “southwest township”) in Johannesburg. Many of which are composed of the same make-shift materials, but we also saw many simple, sturdy and colorful homes of wood or cement, often with one-car garages. Apartheid is gone and poverty clings but is being nudged.

The gig was a special one as well. NAS was to be one of several groups participating in the “IHLOMBE South Africa Choral Festival,” arranged by Classical Movements, a company specializing in orchestral and choral musical tours. IHLOMBE (pronounced Ish-LOM-BAY) translates from the Zulu as “applause,” an excellent omen. Four concerts and one Mass in as many venues over nine days, interspersed with sight-seeing tours and visits to sites of cultural and political significance beckoned.

On July 4th we lifted off JFK, minds undoubtedly abrew with expectations and apprehensions as we flew across six time zones on the fourteen and one-half hour flight to Johannesburg. All of us had some acquaintance with South Africa and its troubled history, its miraculous transformation from apartheid to equality, and of course the life of the extraordinary Nelson Mandela, yet much mystery remained.

Right from the get-go, looking out the bus window after a morning flight to Cape Town we saw the “instant townships,” collections of single-storey huts and hovels improvised from corrugated iron, plywood, and whatever else could be found and hammered together. Expected. We’ve all seen the photos, read the news. But surprise! Squeezed out numbers that ended at 51 is not as easy as it sounds. At this writing both Donna & James are enjoying a very well-earned rest away from crowds, questions, numbers under 51, and anything calling itself Plan B.

First some backstory. Because NAS hack-burnered touring after 2008’s financial finger in the eye (save for a small and brief tour to Cuba in 2010), and because South Africa loomed as a possible destination, the response was swift. NASers – current and alumni, singers and groupies -- from Hawaii, Germany, France, and California as well as the Right Coast – all drawn by the lure of a unique and romantic adventure, signed on to form an unprecedented tour group of 51 souls (34 singers and 17 groupies), roughly the size of a military platoon.

Donna Zalichin and James Crowell stepped up to take on the task of making it all happen with Donna supervising overall strategic operations – multiple, complex and shifting -- while James took command of troop movements (a/k/a cat wrangling), assuring that we moved to and from and between events on time. Give or take. Since many of the group hadn’t toured with us before and others not for a while, the traditional NAS Head-Count security check took a while to work properly. Getting 51 people to call
or squelch his vision was another emotional turn-around. No one could fail to be appalled by the sparse and tiny cell, and no spine would not be chilled by the fact he slept on that hard often wet floor all those years. But you might find yourself smiling, pleased even. Because standing there at the now whitewashed cruelty, you know the prisoner is free and about to celebrate his 95th birthday.

The educated and articulate guide taking us about the rededicated island offered another moment of dry wit along with a sharp poke at our own racial history. A black African, the guide was detailing the hard life endured by prisoners when an enthusiastic tourist called out a penguin sighting and a request for where more might be seen. The guide reprimanded with a sly smile, “Why do you want to see penguins? They all look alike.” The laugh that followed was slightly swallowed by the mostly white visitors.

Visits to The District Six Museum (a sector in Cape Town) dedicated island offered another moment of dry wit along with a sharp poke at our own racial history. A black African, the guide was detailing the hard life endured by prisoners. A black African, the guide was detailing the hard life endured by prisoners.

Mix the eleven official languages, three official capitals, 45 million inhabitants -- 77% black, 10% white, 8% mixed race, 2.5% Indian or Asian descent -- and you have an idea of the weft and warp of this huge (almost twice the size of Texas) nation's complex tapestry. With such an eclectic mix of ethnicities, a varied and exotic cuisine was probably inevitable but came as an unexpected delight, though sometimes too special for some western tastes. We dined on Malay spicy tomato soup, South Afrikaanse bobotie (spiced minced meat baked with an egg-based topping), an Indian lentil and bean dish, an occasional tang of Asian, French and Dutch taste, and being on the edge of two oceans, plenty of fresh fish. And, of course, we'll always have the Chocolate Orgasm.

New York Times Review

Among ensembles that champion new music, many trumpet the wide diversity of the composers they perform. Yet there is much to be said for a group that builds long-term associations with favored composers. This has been a defining attribute of the New Amsterdam Singers, a skilled 70-voice choir, which ended its 45th season with a concert on Thursday night at St. Ignatius of Antioch Episcopal Church on the Upper West Side, conducted by its music director, Clara Longstreth.

The chorus boasts an impressive list of premieres and commissions. But some of the same names keep coming up. Could there be more natural? Two of those regulars were performed on this program, titled “Premiere! American Poetry Settings.” One was Ronald Perera, who was on hand for the New York premiere of “The Star in the Pal,” six songs set to whimsical poems by David McCord. Though the texts are pretty light, Mr. Perera’s pleasure in the fanciful words comes through in his appealing, quirky music, which the choristers sing with rich sound and liveliness. Mr. Perera spoke to the audience about his 20-year association with Ms. Longstreth and the chorus, which has resulted in six major works. This is “no longer a trial marriage,” he said.

Another regular, Matthew Harris, had two works on Thursday’s program. I especially liked “Three Plums,” harmonically pulsating settings of poems by William Carlos Williams. The chorus also offered Mr. Harris’s....

Post concert, a group of twenty NASers remained to enjoy recreational visits to Chobe Safari Park in Botswana and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe. As we welcomed the quiet reflection of a Zambezi River dinner cruise, spotting crocs and hippos during cocktails, enjoying a candlelight dinner of freshly caught fish, we toasted the comradeship of the adventure. As the sun slipped into the Zambezi, the word heard most was “magic!” What better word to describe all we did, all we learned, and all we felt on our journey to the bottom of the world!

Still not sure we didn’t stand on our heads.

New York Times Review

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We are grateful for the generous support from our contributors in 2012–2013.

**ARDS AND ANGELS**

**Anonymous**  
Margaret Brose  
Robert H. & Jessie Palmer  
A. Robert Pietrzak  
Turner Construction Company  
Malcolm & Carolyn Wiener

**ANGELS**

Henny H. Amsteld  
Michael & Dudley Del Balso  
John & Gail Duncan  
Dan & Rae Emmett Forest Laboratories, Inc.  
Hanne & K. Jeremy Grantham  
Dr. Atallah Kappas  
Ann M. McKinney  
Judith Pott  
Paul Volcker & Anke Dening

**BENEFACTORS**

Kimberly McFarlane Allan  
Elizabeth Basile  
Robin D. Beckhard  
Joseph Brooks  
John & Mary D. Brust  
Margaret & Barry Bryan  
Gillian Burke  
Jethro Eisenstein & Stefany Gordon  
Stacey Farley & Peter Davoren  
Gordon & Maggie Gray  
Rick Hubberd & Gail Bueske  
Hannah Kerwin  
Katherine E. Levy  
Bettina Murray  
Michael & Elena Patterson  
Beth Rakow  
Barbara Paul Robinson & Charles Raskob Robinson  
Ed Schultz & Lauren Scott  
John R. Scullin  
Abigail Slosane & Michael Flack  
Elspeth E. Strong  
Margo & Anthony Viscusi  
Donna Zalichin & Barry Kramer  
Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff & Barry S. Pinchoff

**PATRONS**

M. Bernard & Elsie Adinoff  
Nick & Hanay Angel  
Doug & Sarah Banker  
Tom & Nancy Berner  
Carol Binnamart & Harvey Minksy  
Jeffrey Buckner  
James & Dana Crowell  
Jody & Lee Davies  
Victor & Carol Gallo  
Pam & George Glaser  
Dennis Goodenough  
James Gregory  
André & Rose Guthman  
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Amy Harrison  
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Slade & Phyllis Mills  
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Glenn Parker  
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Richard Pendleton  
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Alan & Barbara Polinsky  
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Jim Ramage  
Renee Russell  
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Eileen Shepard & H. Zuckerman  
Honey Waldman  
Michael Zimmerman  
Matthew & Myra Zuckerbraun

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William & Helen Evarts  
Paula & Julian Franklin  
Hans & Doris Gruenwald  
Beatriz Irigo  
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Ellen Stark  
Jennifer Tahan  
Amy K. White  
Sandra Wilson  
Jacqueline Winterkorn, M.D.  
Cecil & Gilda Wray

**PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

Clara Longstreth, Music Director: Clara Longstreth has conducted New Amsterdam Singers since its formation in 1968. She has served on the faculty of Rutgers University, where she conducted the Voorheers Choir of Douglas College. A student of G. Wallace Woodworth at Harvard, Ms. Longstreth trained for her Master's degree at the Juilliard School under Richard Westenburg. Further study included work with Amy Kaiser and Semjon Bychkov at the Mannes College of Music and with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival.

In 1997 Ms. Longstreth guest-conducted the Limón Dance Company in performances with NAS and the Riverside Church Choir. In 2010 she again conducted the Limón Dance Company at the Skirball Center at NYU. She is a frequent guest conductor at the adjudicator of choral festivals, conducted the Riverdale Country School choral groups and conducted the Juilliard Chorus and Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall. In 2006 she presented a lecture-demonstration on “Adventures in Programming” for the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.

Of Ms. Longstreth’s programs, Allan Kozinn wrote in the on “Adventures in Programming” for the Eastern Division Convention of the American Choral Directors Association.

Max Blum, Assistant Music Director: Max Blum is thrilled to return for a third season with the New Amsterdam Singers. As an adjunct Lecturer at Brooklyn College, he also conducts the Brooklyn College Conservatory Singers. Max sings with professional choirs throughout Manhattan, as well as with the Yale Choral Artists, a new chamber ensemble which recently performed in concerts directed by William Christie and Mark Morris.

Max completed his Master’s in Choral Conducting in 2011 at the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Masaaki Suzuki, Marguerite Brooks, Jeffrey Douma, and many guest artists, and was the Assistant Conductor of the Yale Glee Club, which he led in cathedrals and concert halls throughout Europe.

Pen Ying Fang, Accompanist: Pen Ying Fang was born in Taipei, Taiwan, and began studying piano at age five. She attended an “experimental” music-focused grade school there until later moving to the United States to continue her education. Here she studied with Paul Hoffmann and Barbara Gonzalez-Palmer, earning a B.M. and M.M. in Piano at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She has performed around the New York metropolitan area, building an extensive repertoire of solo and chamber works. Ms. Fang has accompanied the master classes of many prominent artists, including Keith Underwood, Evelyn Glennie, Brian McInnis, and Christopher Amrison. Additionally, she has toured domestically and overseas with various choirs in the New York area, and in 2007 she played at the “Florence Voice Seminar” in Florence, Italy. Currently she serves as a staff accompanist at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, N.J., and teaches piano students in the central New Jersey area.

Lauren Scott, Manager: Lauren Scott has just completed the fourth year of her return as Manager of NAS. She previously served as Manager from 1996-2004. In the interim she served on the NAS Board of Directors as Vice President and Secretary. In her career as an Arts Administrator before joining NAS she was the Human Resources Director of Carnegie Hall, Personnel Manager and Assistant to the Managing Director of Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Associate Company Manager of the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Most recently she was General Manager of Roots&Branches Theater Company. Lauren is also a professional actress appearing off-Broadway, in summer stock and dinner theatre, and in film and television. She is a member of the League of Professional Theatre Women and has served as its Vice President. She has a B.A. in History and Government from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida.

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Chorus Board Members 2012–2013

Robin Beckhard (President) is SVP at Merryck & Co., a business leader mentoring firm providing guidance to C-Suite executives by former CEOs. She has sung with NAS for 24 years.

Donna Zalichin (Vice President) is a consultant for non-profit organizations, specializing in organizational assessment, leadership transitions, and retreat facilitation.

James Crowell (Treasurer) is a Project Management Consultant with over twenty years of experience in the IT industry. Nina Reiniger (Secretary), who has been an NAS alto since 2009 and on the NAS Board since 2012, was trained as a medical research scientist at Harvard University.

Jethro Eisenstein is a lawyer in private practice in New York City.

Philip Holmgren has been a member of New Amsterdam Singers since 1996. He currently sings in Chamber Chorus.

Hannah Kerwin is Director of Bound Brook Memorial Library in New Jersey.

Paul Meyers is vice chairman of Pediatrics at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Nate Mickelson is instructor of English at Stella and Charles Guttman Community College and a PhD candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center.

Robert Pietrzak is a litigation partner at the law firm of Sidley Austin LLP.

Barbara Zucker-Pinchoff is a risk management coordinator at Mt. Sinai. A physician-jeweller-singer, she has sung with NAS for almost 30 years.

Non-Chorus Board Members 2012–2013

Kimberly McFarlane Allan is Vice President at Bank of America, HL&I Program Management.

John Duncan, former NAS chorus member (30+ years), tour and benefit meister, is current board president of another non-profit and is semi-retired as an interior designer.

Dennis Goodenough is the founder of DG3 Consulting, a strategic consulting practice focusing on global payments and securities processing post-trade processing. Dennis has been affiliated with NAS since 1981 as a singer, benefit organizer and past treasurer.

Amy Harrison, former Manager of NAS, is Managing Director of the modern dance company RIOULT Dance NY.

Harriet Levine is a certified holistic Health Practitioner/Coach and Consultant, a violinist in several community orchestras and chamber music groups, and also an active member in the Volunteer Council of the NY Philharmonic.

Ann M. McKinney is enjoying life in northwest Connecticut, serving as Secretary of the Board of Music Mountain (a summer chamber music festival), teaching cello, working as a Hospice volunteer, playing in a bell choir, training and running her dogs in agility, and singing in two choruses.

Board of Advisors

Amy Kaiser           Allan Miller
Charles Kaufman      Gregg Smith
Franz Leichter       Albert K. Webster
Paul Alan Levi

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