Celebrating 50 Years

Chester County Choral Society

1973 - 2023
The Chester County Choral Society (CCCS) is celebrating its 50th season in 2022-2023. Founded in 1973 as the Exton Chorale, CCCS is a non-profit community chorus of 80 auditioned, volunteer singers from the greater Chester County region, led by a professional director, associate director, accompanist and governed by a volunteer board of directors.

CCCS is dedicated to excellence in performing diverse choral music in order to enrich the cultural life of the community, audiences, and its members. CCCS presents two to three major concerts per year in multiple venues and offers outreach concerts at retirement communities and community events such as Chester County’s Naturalization Ceremony.

CCCS collaborates with other choirs, professional soloists, conductors and orchestras including Kennett Symphony, Newark Symphony Orchestra, Pennsylvania Philharmonic, and Immaculata Symphony.

CCCS has toured twice in Europe, and by invitation has sung in Colonial Williamsburg, Mt. Vernon, the National Cathedral, Unionville, Alfred University, Longwood Gardens, and others.

CCCS presents quality performances of choral music’s best-known works and has presented two world premieres by Chester County composers: David Bennett Thomas’s *By the Brandywine* and Valerie Showers Crescenz’ *Mass of Peace*.

In 1993 CCCS established the Excellence in Vocal Performance Competition to recognize, promote, and reward the achievement of young singers. CCCS has awarded over $25,000 to high school seniors since its founding.

CCCS’s Chamber Ensemble, which was begun in 2009, focuses on advanced repertoire for concerts and liturgies. The Ensemble performs occasional concerts and has represented CCCS at events such as the Jonathan Beech Memorial Concert in Kennett Square, PA.

CCCS has experimented with various small ensembles to provide additional opportunities for members to create, direct, or sing in a small group to expand our musical offerings.
The Chester County Choral Society began as the Exton Chorale in September, 1973. It was formed by Craig E. Rider with singers from five area church choirs who were seeking challenging and varied repertoire.

Spring 1974 – First Spring Concert, An Evening with Romberg, Rodgers, and Hammerstein.

Spring 1976 – With the Grove Tabernacle Choir performed a Bicentennial Concert as a memorial tribute to James Mark Bruce, II, at Arch Street United Methodist Church in Philadelphia.
Spring 1976 – A Bicentennial Concert, *One Nation Under God*

Spring 1977 – Spring Pops Concert with Chamber Brass Quintet
December 1977 – Article regarding history of Exton Chorale.

December 1978 Christmas Concert for Jason Mooney, a benefit concert for Jason Mooney, a child with a rare disease. Peter Thomson, an 8th grade student, played bagpipes.
Spring 1980 – The Exton Choral e

1981 – The Exton Chorale Logo first appeared on a program.

1982 – Paul Hoffman became the Interim Director for one year
1983 – Bernice Hatch Brady became Director. During her tenure the group expanded to 70 members to include singers from throughout Chester County.

1988 – Festival of Dedication of new sanctuary at Exton Baptist Church

Spring 1988 – The Chorale presents *Bach to Broadway* Concert
November 1989 – Article regarding couples in the Chorale:

Chorale keeping couples in tune

BY ANDREW MACMURTHY

When some members of the Stars Chorale, singing “This Is My Father” during their annual dinner performance, they noticed their partners were lovingly singing along.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry recorded the duet, and after it was published, they received many letters from couples who wanted to sing it together. The couple from the United States even sent a telegram saying, “I love it, and I would love to have a chance to sing it.”

Chorale members Ben and Gail Hinshaw of Denver are one of seven married couples who sing together in the group. Continuing on Page 1...

Chorale keeping couples in tune

Continued from Page 1:

Ben and Gail Hinshaw of Denver are one of seven married couples who sing together in the group, and they are enjoying the experience. “The other couple in the house who sing together is the schedule,” said Ben. “I love it, and I would love to have a chance to sing it.”

Chorale members Ben and Gail Hinshaw of Denver are one of seven married couples who sing together in the group. Continuing on Page 1...

February 1990 – Small groups of Chorale members perform Singing Valentines to raise funds for the upcoming European concert tour.

Chorale members John, Carol and Felix Kulp of Chester Springs make singing in the group a family experience.

Chorale members John, Carol and Felix Kulp of Chester Springs make singing in the group a family experience.
**June 22 – July 6, 1991** - Concert tour to Europe, performing in Austria, France, Germany, and Switzerland
Concerts Performed:
- June 24 - Strasbourg, France
- June 25 - Molsheim, France
- June 27 - Engelberg, Switzerland
- June 29 - Volders Kirche, Innsbruck, Austria
- June 30 – Westendorf, Austria
July 4 – Buhlertal, Germany

July 5 – St. Laurentius Kirche, Ahrweiler, Germany

December 1991 – The Chorale sang with the Orpheus Club at the Academy of Music at their first private concert.

December 1992 The Chorale performed at Valley Forge Music Fair as part of Rosemary Clooney’s *White Christmas Party*, accompanying Clooney and Debby Boone, as well as singing several Christmas favorites.
Spring 1993 – The first Excellence in Vocal Performance Competition for high school seniors was launched with one winner, Rebecca Tuffey, being honored.

Fall 1995 – Ann Marie Ellis became the Accompanist for the Chorale.

1995 – Chorale sang at Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, VA
**June 27 - July 9 1997** – Concert tour through the British Isles, performing in England, Scotland, and Wales

Tour guide (John Fryer) greeting Bernice Brady's Chorale

Chorale at Stirling Castle, Scotland

St. Giles Church, Edinburgh  
Ladies and bagpiper, Edinburgh
July 4 - Chorale at a Ruthin Castle, Wales singing National Anthem  
Concert at St. James Church, Chipping Campden, England

July 8, Concert at St. James, Piccadilly, London

Spring 1999 – The Chorale represented Pennsylvania in the National Festival of the States in Mt. Vernon, and performed at the National Cathedral, St. Matthews, and Christchurch. They laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.
NEXT 24 YEARS – Chester County Choral Society*
Fall 1999 – Present
(*Renamed in 2000)
Gary P. Garletts, Artistic Director
Pattie Mancuso, Associate Director
Accompanist, Ann Marie Ellis

Fall 1999 – Gary P. Garletts became the Artistic Director. Under his direction, CCCS has sung major works and collaborated with several orchestras, brass bands, and chorales.

Fall 2000 – The Exton Chorale was renamed Chester County Choral Society to better reflect its presence in and membership from the Chester County area. A new logo was designed by charter member Ruth Bullock.

October 2001 – CCCS travelled to Uniontown to perform Testament of Freedom by Randall Thompson with the Greater Uniontown Chorale weeks after 9/11/01.


Left to right: Gary Garletts, Paul Hoffman, Bernice Brady, Craig Rider
February 2005 – The first Dinner and Song Gala fundraiser was initiated. The Gala included dinner, silent auction and performances of contemporary music selections by individuals and small groups in a festive setting.

Spring 2005 – Invitational Concert at the National Cathedral, Washington, DC.

**Spring 2009** – CCCS performed Mendelssohn’s Elijah with soloists and orchestra.

![Choir](image)

**Spring 2010** – The world premiere of *Mass of Peace*, by local composer Valerie Crescenz, was performed as well as several works by Samuel Barber to celebrate the centennial of his birth.

**Spring 2010** – Judge Charles B. Smith, benefactor of the Vocal Competition Awards from 2010 through 2019, and President Neil Cullen.

![Photograph](image)

**November 2010** – Performed Beethoven’s 9th Symphony, *Ode to Joy*, with Immaculata University Symphony and three other choirs.
February 2011 – Dinner and Song Gala – *An Evening at the Oscars*. All songs performed were Academy Award nominees or winners.

2011 Society Performances:

**Spring** – Performed *Testament of Freedom* by Randall Thompson and *Dona Nobis Pacem* by R. V. Williams at *War and Peace* concert to commemorate the events of 9/11/01

**August** – Performed portions of *Testament of Freedom* with the Kennett Symphony and Mary Green Singers at the *Celebrate Freedom* concert at Longwood Gardens

**October** – Travelled to Alfred, NY to perform *Testament of Freedom* with the Alfred Chamber Singers and Orchestra
March 2012 – Several members of CCCS sang for the Naturalization Ceremony at the West Chester Courthouse. Members have continued to participate in a number of these ceremonies welcoming new citizens.

December 2012 – First of 40th Anniversary Concerts, Sing Forth This Day
**Spring 2013 – 40th Anniversary Concert, Brahms *Requiem***

**Spring 2013 – 40th Anniversary Concert – PA State Senator Andrew Dinniman presenting Recognition Certificate to CCCS President Bob Morgan**

**February 2014 – Concert for children with Disney songs sung by the Dinner and Song Company**
Spring 2015 – The Civil War, 150th Anniversary Retrospective with Beck’s Brigade Band

Fall 2018 – A new logo was designed and introduced:
Spring 2019 – Great Opera Choruses

Fall 2019 – Handel’s Messiah

Fall 2021 – Let’s Begin Again – outdoor concert with masks

December 2022 – Chamber Ensemble

Pattie Mancuso, Associate Director 2022
OTHER HISTORICAL FACTS ABOUT CCCS:

Past Presidents:
- Tom Jones 1976-1981
- David Fradin 1981-1983
- Carol Kulp 1984-1985
- Susan Kurt 1985-1987
- Janet Heller 1987-1990
- Jody Maneth 1990-1991
- Valerie Brogan/Greet 1991-1993
- Hazel Brightbill 1993-1995
- Norman Greet 1995-1997
- Marjorie Majka 1997-1999
- Steve Shirk 1999-2001
- Ron Boles 2001-2003
- Lloyd Hope 2003-2005
- Dave Shealy 2005-2007
- Fred Thompson 2007-2009
- Neil Cullen 2009-2011
- Bob Morgan 2011-2013
- Susan & Wayne Kline 2013-2015
- Kara Bourdrea 2015-2017
- Chuck Cuttic 2017-2019
- Sue Drummond 2019-2021
- John Banionis 2021-2023

March 2019: Seven Past Presidents at Memorial for Hazel Brightbill

Back: Bob Morgan, Neil Cullen, Fred Thompson, Lloyd Hope, Ron Boles.
Front: Steve Shirk, Susan Kline, with Gary Garletts, Director.

CCCS has performed the following major works:
- Bach’s Magnificat in 2002, 2010
- Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony in 2010
- Beethoven’s Choral Fantasy in 2010
- Brahms’ A German Requiem in 2013
- Britten’s Ceremony of Carols in 1999
- Clausen’s A New Creation in 2002
Charpentier's *Midnight Mass* in 2014
Valerie Crescenz's *Mass of Peace*, world premiere 2010
Faure's *Requiem* in 2018
Gounod's *Mass in C* in 1981
Haydn's *St. Nicholas Mass* in 2015
Joseph Jenkins' *Cantate Hodie* in 2006, 2012
Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in 2009
Menotti's *Shepherd's Chorus* from *Amahl* in 1979, 2009, 2017
Montgomery's *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* in 2015
Mozart's *Mass in C* in 2006
Mozart's *Missa Brevis in D* in 2023
Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* in 2014
Rheinberger’s *The Star of Bethlehem* in 2004, 2016
Rutter's *Requiem* in 2009
Saint-Saens' *Christmas Oratorio* in 2001, 2018
Schubert's *Magnificat* in 2014
Schubert's *Mass in G* in 1997, 2004
Susá's *Carols and Lullabies* in 2011 and 2022
David Bennett Thomas' *By The Brandywine* world premiere in 2008
Thompson's *Frostiana* in 2008
Thompson's *The Testament of Freedom* in 2001 and 2011
Vivaldi's *Gloria in D* in 1976, 2008, 2021
Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* in 2011

**Collaborations:**

Grove Aeolian Ringers in 1981
Orpheus Club at the Academy of Music in 1991
Praise in Bronze Handbell Ensemble in 1991
The Sounding Brass in 1992
Ocean City (NJ) Pops Orchestra in 1998
Kennett Symphony, Kennett Symphony Children's Chorus, and Mary Green Singers several times
Kennett Middle School Singers several times
Greater Uniontown Chorale in 2001 and 2002
Chesapeake Brass Band in 2005
Westminster Brass Quintet in 2006
Kimberton Waldorf School in 2007
Alfred University Chamber Singers in 2009 and 2011
West Chester Ecumenical Choir in 2009
Immaculata Symphony with 3 other choirs in 2010
West Chester Brass Quintet in 2012
Beck's Philadelphia Brigade Band in 2015
Prana Winds in 2013, 2015, 2022

**Concert tours and invitational concerts:**
- Bruton Parish Church (Colonial Williamsburg) in 1995
- National Cathedral (Washington, DC) in 1996, 2005
- Valley Forge Music Fair in 1992
- Concert tour to Europe, performing in Austria, France, Germany, and Switzerland in 1991
- Concert tour through the British Isles, performing in England, Scotland, and Wales in 1997
- The Chorale represented Pennsylvania in the National Festival of the States in Mt. Vernon, VA in 1999, and performed at St. Matthews and The National Cathedral in DC, and Christ Church in Alexandria, VA.
- Malvern's *Victorian Christmas* several times
- Longwood Gardens many times
- Naturalization Ceremony in West Chester Courthouse many times
- West Chester *Old Fashioned Christmas* many times
- Uniontown with Greater Uniontown Chorale in 2001
- Brandywine River Museum, Chadds Ford
- Waterloo Gardens, Exton
- Hagley Museum, Wilmington, DE in 2010
- Alfred University, NY in 2011
- Brownbacks UCC Senior’s Group, Spring City in 2014
- HandiCrafters, Thorndale in 2014
- Brandywine Valley Association/Myrick Center, West Chester in 2015
- Fundraiser for Still Waters Ministries, Morgantown in 2015
- United Methodist Women’s Group, West Chester in 2015
- Fundraiser for Bethesda Project, which supports the homeless in Philadelphia in 2022

**Outreach Concerts - Retirement Communities:**
- Barclay Friends, West Chester; Freedom Village, Coatesville; Kendal-Crosslands, Kennett Square; Maris Grove, Glen Mills; Meadowbrook Retirement, Skippack; Shannondell, Valley Forge; Tel Hai Retirement Community, Honey Brook; Whitehorse Village, Newtown Square; Willow Valley Retirement Community, Lancaster

**Chester County Choral Society Significant Event Timeline**

1973  The Exton Chorale was formed by Craig E. Rider with singers from five area church choirs who were seeking challenging and varied repertoire.

1976  The Chorale and Grove Tabernacle Choir performed a Bicentennial Concert as a memorial tribute to James Mark Bruce II

1978  Christmas Concert benefit for Jason Mooney. Peter Thomson (eighth grader, bagpipes)
1982  Paul Hoffman became Interim Director for one year
1983  Bernice Hatch Brady became Director. During her tenure, the group expanded to 70 members to include singers from throughout Chester County.
1988  Festival of Dedication of new sanctuary at Exton Baptist Church
1990  Small groups of Chorale members performed Singing Valentines in person or on the phone to raise funds for the upcoming concert tour.
1991  Concert tour to Europe, performing in Austria, France, Germany and Switzerland
1991  Performed with the Orpheus Club at the Academy of Music at the first private concert
1992  Performed at Valley Forge Music Fair as part of Rosemary Clooney's *White Christmas Party*, accompanying Clooney and Debby Boone, as well as singing several Christmas favorites.
1993  The first *Excellence in Vocal Performance Competition* for high school seniors was launched with one winner, Rebecca Tuffey, being honored.
1995  Ann Marie Ellis became the Accompanist for CCCS
1997  Concert tour through the British Isles, performing in England, Scotland, Wales
1999  Gary P. Garletts became Artistic Director. Gary has broadened CCCS’s repertoire to include major works and collaborations with exceptional soloists, orchestras, brass bands, and chorales.
2000  The Exton Chorale was renamed Chester County Choral Society to better reflect its presence in and membership from the Chester County area.
2001  CCCS launched its first website, chestercountychoralsociety.org.
2001  CCCS travelled to Uniontown to perform *Testament of Freedom* by Randall Thompson with the Greater Uniontown Choral only weeks after 9/11/01, which made the work very meaningful.
2003  For the 30th Anniversary Concert, CCCS performed Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Walzer*. The former Directors directed several pieces.
2004  The first *Dinner and Song* Gala was initiated with individuals and small groups performing in a dinner setting including a fundraising auction.
2006  Invitational – Centennial Gala Concert at St Matthias Parish – performed Mozart’s Coronation Mass
2008  For the 35th Anniversary Concert CCCS performed a work commissioned for CCCS, *By The Brandywine*, by David Bennett Thomas.
2009  Chamber Ensemble was formed as a small group focused on more challenging repertoire
2010  The world premiere of *Mass of Peace*, by local composer Valerie Crescenz, was performed by CCCS as well as several works by Samuel Barber to celebrate the centennial of his birth.
2010  Performed Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony with Immaculata Symphony and 3 other choruses
2010  A CCCS Facebook Group was created.
2011  CCCS travelled to Alfred, NY to perform Testament of Freedom by Randall Thompson with the Alfred Chamber Singers and Orchestra.
2011  CCCS performed portions of Testament of Freedom with the Kennett Symphony and Mary Green Singers at the Celebrate Freedom concert at Longwood Gardens to commemorate the events of 9/11/01.
2011  CCCS improved its website, chestercountychoralsociety.org.
2013  Brahms’ Requiem 40th Anniversary Concert
2013  Chamber Ensemble performed at St. Peter’s, Lewes, DE.
2014  Children’s Concert – Disney music
2014  Carmina Burana with percussion
2014  Members participated in Yoga Voice workshop.
2015  Chamber Ensemble sang for 8th Jonathan Beech Memorial in Kennett
2015  The Civil War – a 150th Anniversary Retrospective – World premiere of Gary Garletts’ new arrangement of Montgomery’s Gettysburg Address
2016  The Three B’s:
Bach selections from Mass in B Minor
Beethoven Fantasia in C Minor (“Choral Fantasy”)
Brahms Liebeslieder Waltzer, Schicksalslied
2016  CCCS sang the National Anthem at a Phillies game
2016  An official CCCS Facebook Page was created
2018  CCCS - New website, chescochoral.org, webmaster, Gerry Daney
2019  Great Opera Choruses
2019  Handel’s Messiah
2020  A CCCS You Tube channel was launched.
2020-2022  Due to Covid-19 quarantine, CCCS produced 5 Virtual Recordings:
November 2020: Requiem, Gilkyson
December 2020: Christmas Medley 2020, arr. Gary Garletts
June 2021: Excerpts from Judas Maccabaeus - Hallelujah, Amen; See the Conquering Hero Comes - GF Handel
August 2021: Let’s Begin Again, Rutter
March 2022: The Storm Is Passing Over, Tindley
2022  Pattie Mancuso became Associate Director
2023  A CCCS Instagram account was launched.
2023  50th Anniversary Concert and Reception featuring Mozart’s Missa Brevis in D
Vocal Competition Winners:

1993  Rebecca Tuffey  2009  Laurel McLaughlin
1994  Rachel Olsen  2010  William Townsend
1996  Crystal Chen  2012  Laura K. McCauley
1997  Zakiya Young  2013  Heather McConnell
1998  Jeffery McDermott  2014  Shannon Maguire
1999  Melissa Baker  2015  Abu Akki
2000  Jennifer Hasselhan  2016  Rachel Kobernick
2001  J. Elizabeth March  2017  Thomas Lock
2002  Meghan Santulli  2018  Emily Damasco
2003  Nathalie Dalziel  2019  Sofia Bobrysheva
2004  Emily Adams  2020-2021  – No competition due to Covid-19
2005  Adriana Devine  2015  Bryce Kelly
2006  Meghan Elizabeth Hickey  2022  Bryce Kelly
2007  Lauryn Salvo  2023  Macy Danenhower
2008  Murphy Bug

Dinner and Song:
From 2004 through 2018 CCCS presented a Dinner and Song Gala with solos and small singing groups performing contemporary music in a festive dinner setting. A fundraising auction raised funds for professional musicians for concerts.

2004  – Evening of Dinner and Song
2006  – Music and Amore
2007  – Music...The Food of Love
2008  – On with the Show
2009  – Juke Box Saturday Night
2010  – Talking About My Generation
2011  – An Evening at the Oscars
2012  – Introducing...The Beatles
2013  – Sounds of ’73
2014  – Be Our Guest!
2015  – Coast to Coast
2016  – A Night in the Country
2017  – Love...Lost & Found
2018  – Now Playing

February 2018  – Dinner and Song Gala – Now Playing

Kathy Kauterman and John Fryer   D&S Company
December 2022 – Carols and Lullabies Concert

CCCS thanks the following members of the 50th Anniversary Committee:
  Coordination: John Banionis, Jaymie Lacombe
  Concert: Ron Bolesta
  History Booklet and Displays: Susan Kline, Barbara McIntosh
  Mementos: Debrah Stradley Moore
  Reception: Irene Banionis, Kathy Kauterman, Sue Davies, Barry Greenspan, Alex Cuttic
  And others too numerous to mention!

Chester County Choral Society
P. O. Box 3466
West Chester, PA 19381
A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

www.chescochoral.org
Follow us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram