

# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS

2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



# MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*Clara Longstreth*



The 2023-2024 season included even greater variety than in years past. We went from Baroque fare in December to an opera in March and then to mostly a cappella Romantic music in May.

December's "A Season of Light" took its title from Esenwald's "Lux Aeterna." Three Baroque works, Buxtehude's "Missa Brevis," Schütz's motet from his "Requiem," and Bach's "Lobet den Herrn" made up the core repertoire. We also sang motets by the 16th Century Italian composer, Salamone Rossi, in Hebrew. Chamber Chorus was happy to return to a favorite Renaissance motet, "Civitas Sancti Tui." Bach's exuberant "Alleluia" closed his piece (and the concert) with fanfares of joy.

In March, we embarked on our co-commission with the cell theatre - an opera by Michael Dellaira - with keen curiosity, but no inkling of the great success and fun that "Arctic Explorations" would prove to be. Here are the elements of this opera that made it vastly different from any project we had done before:

- A riveting story based on the book "Arctic Explorations" by Elisha Kent Kane about his adventurous travels to the Arctic
- Collaboration between Dellaira and Inuk drum dancer Nuka Alice during development
- Folk instruments (guitar and banjo) as part of an on-stage 7-piece orchestra
- The presence of Nuka Alice, who played a central role in the performance
- The NAS Chorus sang portions of the piece in the Inuit language
- Four excellent professional singers in costume
- Professional stage direction and lighting

We were all delighted to learn - a week before the concerts - that we were sold out for both performances. Streaming was available two weeks later. Unofficial reviews sent to me by email were uniformly excellent. A professional CD of the opera will be coming out soon.

Rehearsals started a week late for the May concert due to the norovirus, which hit many singers and the conductor. But the chorus made up for this with hard work on the challenging repertoire. Britten's "Hymn to St. Cecilia" was the centerpiece of the program, an always beloved a cappella piece on a fascinating poem by W.H. Auden. Brahms songs and his motet, "O Heiland Reiss," were beautifully sung by both Full and Chamber Chorus. The concert closed with Matt Harris's quasi-samba "Drinking Song" and Jake Runestad's exciting "Alleluia," complete with rhythmic clapping by the chorus.

The chorus was lucky to have the creative and enthusiastic help of Assistant Conductor T.J. Barnes for the season, and we are happy that he will return for 2024-2025.

Clara Longstreth

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

*Michelle Neary*



We had another wonderful year under Clara Longstreth's baton! She outlined the exciting programs for the 2023-2024 season above; they were filled with choral gems spanning a range of several centuries and were rewarding to sing. In particular, the "Arctic Explorations" opera was a real treat. The excellent music was matched by the grand scale of the production with the soloists, the Harlem Chamber Players, and the stage team from the cell theatre. We had staging, lights, costumes, everything! The special nature of the performance was highlighted by a parallel benefit at the Explorer's Club in which we learned more about the Arctic and the theme of exploration.

Along the way, we also continued to monitor the Covid-19 situation. With much appreciation for my fellow members of the Health Committee (Robert Palmer, Vera Sziklai, and Donna Zalichin), we were able to avoid any major outbreaks of respiratory illness during the season.

Last summer was the start of a time of transition for New Amsterdam Singers. Donna handed over the presidential reins to me. We said goodbye to our manager, Pat Neely, with thanks for the year she spent with us, and welcomed Stefanie Izzo to this important role. José Juan Marzal Fernandez moved on from the Assistant Conductor post after a great year, and we happily welcomed T.J. Barnes to that position.

Also last summer, a Transition Committee began meeting regularly to prepare for our bigger transition to a new Music Director when Clara retires at the end of the 2024-2025 season – her 57th! They worked hard to put a search plan in place and make sure that the job posting reflected the values and special qualities of NAS. This past spring and summer were spent reviewing applications and interviewing potential new conductors. Watch for updates in the coming months.

We are very excited for the upcoming 2024-2025 season with Clara as our Music Director. She continues to lead NAS with her signature mix of humor and humility, excellent programming, and top-notch musicianship, and we are all lucky to get to sing with her.

Michelle Neary

# TREASURER'S REPORT

*Orren Alperstein*



I am so pleased to report that FY23-24 was truly a banner year for NAS. We had budgeted conservatively and projected a net loss of \$10,750, but ended up in the black by \$7,075. This was particularly exciting since the previous year, FY 22-23, had ended in the red by \$35,164.

This happy result came about because of several factors:

- Somewhat higher membership income as a result of a larger chorus coming out of the pandemic, and an increase in membership dues.
- Robust ticket sales, both in-person and streaming, especially for the March opera and May concert performances. We also raised ticket prices by \$5 to reflect inflation.
- A very successful - and special - benefit at The Explorers Club which was tied to the opera, Arctic Explorations, commissioned and performed by NAS in March.

A full breakdown of our income and expenses, as well as details about ticket sales and our benefit, are included in this report.

Orren Alperstein

## 23-24 Ticket Sales

	Budgeted	Total Income	In Person	Streaming
December	\$12,600	\$10,705	\$8,635	\$2,070
March	\$15,000	\$16,876	\$14,384	\$2,492
May	\$4,800	\$6,649	\$5,599	\$1,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,400</b>	<b>\$34,230</b>	<b>\$28,618</b>	<b>\$5,612</b>



# TREASURER'S REPORT continued



	2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Budgeted	2023-24 Actual
<b>GENERAL OPERATING REVENUE</b>			
Ticket Sales & Performances	\$25,466	\$33,000	\$34,830
Dues/CD Sales/Music Rentals	\$15,127	\$14,800	\$16,502
Benefits & Events	\$8,621	\$12,500	\$53,480
Individual/Corporate/Foundation Donations	\$61,913	\$61,000	\$54,300
<i>Total General Operating Revenue</i>	<b>\$111,127</b>	<b>\$121,300</b>	<b>\$159,112</b>
<b>SPECIAL ACTIVITY REVENUE</b>			
50th Anniversary Campaign Donations	\$7,900	\$0	\$0
Private Trust Gift	\$0	\$500	\$63
<i>Total Special Activity Revenue</i>	<b>\$7,900</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$63</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE: GENERAL + SPECIAL</b>	<b>\$119,027</b>	<b>\$121,800</b>	<b>\$159,175</b>
<b>GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Personnel	\$72,825	\$74,000	\$69,445
Concert, Rehearsal, Music	\$25,463	\$27,000	\$33,373
Promotion/Development	\$13,894	\$17,100	\$43,198
Other Operating Expenses	\$12,198	\$18,150	\$17,366
Outreach	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$0
<i>Total General Operating Expenses</i>	<b>\$127,380</b>	<b>\$139,250</b>	<b>\$163,382</b>
<b>SPECIAL ACTIVITY EXPENSES</b>			
Commissioned Works	\$8,200	\$5,000	\$5,000
Guest Artists	\$18,451	\$31,300	\$31,648
Covid-Related Expenses	\$160	\$500	\$1,127
<i>Total Special Activity Expenses</i>	<b>\$26,811</b>	<b>\$36,800</b>	<b>\$37,775</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:GENERAL + SPECIAL</b>	<b>\$154,191</b>	<b>\$176,050</b>	<b>\$201,157</b>
<b>TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE</b>	<b>(\$35,164)</b>	<b>(\$54,750)</b>	<b>(\$41,982)</b>
ENDOWMENT EARNINGS TRANSFER	\$0	\$0	\$0
ANNIVERSARY FUND TRANSFER	\$0	\$44,000	\$47,750
INTEREST (CHECKING/SAVINGS)	\$0	\$1,000	\$1,307
<b>NET TOTAL INCREASE/DECREASE</b>	<b>(\$35,164)</b>	<b>(\$10,750)</b>	<b>\$7,075</b>

# EXPLORERS CLUB BENEFIT



On Leap Day (February 29), NAS held a very special benefit at the Explorers Club. The event was driven by dedicated board members and a specially appointed benefit committee, and included talks by former Explorers Club President Richard Wiese, Arctic expert Martin Nweeia, and an exclusive performance by Nuka Alice, star of Arctic Explorations. The program included a silent auction, cocktails and dinner. One of our most successful benefits in recent NAS history, the event netted more than \$20,000 in revenue to support our concert season.



All photos by Hannah Kerwin

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# NEW AMSTERDAM SINGERS | 2023-2024



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P.O. Box 373  
Cathedral Station  
New York, NY 10025  
[info@nasingers.org](mailto:info@nasingers.org)

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