

**NORTH SHORE CHORAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Minutes of March 16, 2013, Meeting  
Trinity United Methodist Church, Wilmette

*In attendance:*

Board members: Marcia Bollo, John Darrow, Julia Davids, Susan Demaree, Anne Harkonen (presiding), Tom Keller, Steve LaTour, Renata Lowe, Julie McDowell, Scott Paine, Karen Rigotti, Emily Rivera and Steve Warner (recording)

Guest: Len Barker

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order at 9:06.

The Minutes of the February 9, 2013, board meeting were approved with the correction of ambiguous phrasing in regard to the date of the March meeting.

**STAFF REPORTS**

*Music Director.* Davids presented her report.

–She was greatly pleased with the Lifetime of Singing workshop and expressed thanks to the task force. Almost 300 attended and feedback was positive. The following-day concert went smoothly, thanks to Tom Keller, Steve LaTour and others. Charles Peterson, Dean of the College at North Park University, was pleased with the participation of the NP singers. Soloist Karen Brunssen was greatly impressed by NSCS as an organization. This two-day event represented closure on a year-long project, the inspiration for which came out of a meeting between Davids and Brunssen more than a year ago.

–In regard to the June concert, she expressed appreciation for Sharon Peterson's leadership of the first rehearsal and reported that the orchestra is under contract. Rehearsals for vocal soloists are being scheduled.

–The Donald Chen Young Artists competition for 2013 will be by private audition.

–She reported that she had been appointed one of three judges for an upcoming concerto competition at Northwestern University, service that in her opinion should be beneficial for NSCS in interorganizational terms.

–She is working on concert programs for the 2013-2014 season. She is in conversation with David Schrader for the fall concert and hopes that a committee will be put in place to help plan the April concert, centering on Missa Gaia, which is not itself a full concert-length piece.

*General Manager* Rigotti presented her report.

–Certificates for two tickets to the Lifetime of Singing Concerts were each given to benefit the Northminster (Presbyterian) Nursery School and Y.O.U. (Youth Organization Umbrella).

–In view of the cost of two-sided printing, she thought it wise to continue to print Blue Notes on one side, with notices not essential to NSCS appearing below essential announcements.

–The grant application to Illinois Arts Council has been submitted; Rigotti expressed thanks to Darrow and Harkonen.

–She has been in contact with Carole Bass, NCSC’s liaison at the Evanston Arts Council.  
–She reported a call from Nestor Dyhdalo, general manager of Northbrook Symphony. They wanted NSCS to sing in their 12/8/13 Holiday Concert, but we’re booked. Hearing that they would like to collaborate in the future, she told him that NSCS plans well in advance. Overtures have also been made by Edgewater Singers and by Gary Geiger, of Evanston Children’s Choir.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

*Treasurer.* Darrow distributed copies of the February 2013 financial reports with the caution that, because of the changeover from QuickBooks to Excel, some details are incorrect. Referencing some information from early March, he reported that, due primarily to the hard work of Scott Paine, the Live-at-the-Met benefit and silent auction was a great success, bringing in approximately \$3500. The Lifetime of Singing workshop will about break even due to the \$500 gift from Firstbank Evanston. Ticket revenue for the concert was \$2763, which is a matter of concern: YTD ticket sales are about \$2000 below the same time in 2012. There remains a large gap to be made up by the June concert. Donations are coming along, but Jewel card revenue is lagging. Regarding other matters, he reported that the review of the 2011-2012 financial records by Martha Kinzel is in process.

*Fund Raising.* Paine expressed thanks to the board, NSCS members and the restaurant (“Bravo”) for helping make the opera benefit a financial success as well as a fine entertainment. Even without the auction, the ticket net was \$2000, perhaps something that we could do again.

*Operations.* McDowell reported that a reception to wish Julia Brueck farewell will be held on March 19 at the end of a truncated rehearsal. She did not know if Brueck will wish to return as assistant conductor after her maternity leave.

*Concerts.* Keller reported that attendance at the March 3 concert was 210 persons, 86 of whom were represented by subscription ticket stubs and 54 by ticket sales at the door. Although NSCS was blindsided by competition for parking on the day of the concert, thanks are owed to the representatives of the host venue, Regina Dominican High School, for their warm welcome. Keller’s report occasioned a discussion of how to improve ticket sales. Among the points made were that stability of venues (when people always know where a concert will be) and member enthusiasm for and audience recognition of pieces on the program can help ticket sales.

Thinking ahead to the Missa Gaia concert in 2014, Keller said he would contact the Unitarian Church about availability of the sanctuary for an additional rehearsal and for breakout rooms for a possible workshop on Saturday.

(Discussion of the management of the March 3 concert was resumed at the end of the meeting. See \* p. 4 below.)

*Public Relations.* Demaree reported positive feedback on publicity for the Lifetime of Singing weekend. Looking ahead to the June concert, she stated that a story will appear in WFMT’s program guide, especially because of the connection with soloist Peter Van de Graaff. She plans to insert an audience survey in the program for that concert, it having been some years since NSCS conducted such a survey.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

*NSCS History update.* Barker presented his plans for and progress in bringing Inge Kistler's 1936-1995 history up to date. He has received estimates for print copies, but no decision was made on whether to publish the updated history in paper or electronic copy. Suggestions were made on sources of information for the research.

*Car magnets.* Rivera reported that the magnets, a form of institutional promotion, are ready. In response to her query when she should offer them for sale to members (at \$10), the board left the timing up to her.

*Lifetime-of-Singing Task Force Report.* Lowe remarked on the very positive feedback received on the March 2 workshop and the institutional benefit of increased exposure and potential audience expansion. She acknowledged some logistical problems, which she said will be recorded in the task force's report.

*Chorus America discussion update.* Following up on an Executive Committee meeting of March 13, Rigotti and Demaree reported plans for a day-long board retreat to be held after the end of the current season. To inform the discussion, they propose to get feedback from NSCS members by means of a survey, possibly to be preceded by focus groups. Suggestions were offered on their draft of some questions for the survey. LaTour volunteered assistance with a professional online survey technology used by his firm. Responding to questions about the proposed issue agenda for the board retreat, Rigotti mentioned a revisit to NSCS's current mission statement ("The North Shore Choral Society explores, studies, and performs a wide range of choral music for the enrichment and enjoyment of its singers and audiences") as well as a SWOT analysis (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). The point, she said, is to ascertain board members' priorities for the organization. Engaging a professional facilitator would help. In discussion of scheduling, Davids said that June is too early to her; she would prefer a date later in the summer.

## **NEW BUSINESS.**

*School outreach dates.* Rigotti reported that, given the schedules of Davids, accompanist Sharon Peterson and the teachers at Oakton and Washington schools, it would be possible to schedule our appearances at these sites on May 1 and May 3 respectively. It was suggested that section coordinators be sounded out about these dates and that further information be sought from the school liaisons.

*Grant possibility.* LaTour reported that the the Missa Gaia program (April 2014) appeared to be a good fit for the Elizabeth Cheney Foundation, which has an April 1 deadline. He has provided advice about the application process and requirements to Rigotti, who, with the help of Darrow and Davids, is preparing the application.

*Nominating Committee.* Harkonen observed that elections are coming up soon, for which purpose information is needed on any board members' or coordinators' plans to step down. The task of the nominating committee this year, she thought, would not be arduous. Next year, when new job descriptions have been specified, the task may be bigger. By voice vote, the board

approved Harkonen's appointment of John Summerhays to the 2013 nominating committee.

*Patrons mailing.* In response to Warner's request for advice on the spring patrons mailing, it was agreed that an April date would be most suitable. The suggestion was made to include the Lifetime of Singing workshop participants on the donor mailing list.

*Concert program format.* In response to some feedback, Bollo asked whether NSCS should move to a slick-paper format or to other ways of improving the look of our programs. While recognizing that color screening for some ads could be improved, the consensus of the board was that the programs succeed in the necessary task of conveying a great deal of information. Bollo was thanked for her continuing work in this regard.

*Music Director Evaluation.* Harkonen reminded the board that the Music Director evaluation was overdue. There was discussion of appropriate procedures for such an evaluation. Evidently, Chorus America does not provide a template; perhaps an orchestral association has a template that could be adapted. In view of the press of business at this point in the year, it was agreed to postpone the evaluation until next year.

*\*Discussion of division of labor in concert production:* Harkonen invited a discussion of concert management issues at the March 3 concert. It was agreed that clarification and delineation of roles is in order for the future. The MD will address issues relating to the musical integrity of the performance; the VP for Concerts will be responsible for stage management and the box office; the President will make announcements to the membership regarding other aspects of a concert weekend.

*Announcements.*

Rigotti recommended that board members enter their information on the Volunteer Evanston website: <http://www.cityofevanston.org/news/2011/02/volunteer-evanston-website-launched/>

Darrow announced that the Park Ridge Symphony invites volunteer singers for their performance of Beethoven's Ninth on April 28.

**ADJOURNMENT.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m. The next meeting will be on Saturday, April 13, 2013, at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Stephen Warner  
Secretary