



Singing since 1875

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to perform, foster and advance choral music in the Reading and Berks County Community.



Concert season is underwritten in part by grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and the Reading Musical Foundation. Reading Choral Society receives state arts funding support through a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency, funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.



BERKS SINGS

Fall 2015

Fall & Winter Concerts

Reading Choral Society has a busy schedule planned for this Fall & Winter. We hope you will be able to join us for some or all of the following concerts. Here are some of the highlights:

◇ **Sunday, November 1, 6pm Carmina Burana**
Miller Center for the Arts

RCS opens the season with this thrilling and percussive masterpiece. Please join members of Reading Choral Society, and the Select Choirs from Daniel Boone High School and the Exeter High School Eagleaires in this outstanding performance. The three soloists are: Soprano, Rachel Sterrenberg; Jarrod Miller, tenor; and Johnathan McCullough, Baritone. The RCS orchestra will include two pianists, Mary Bishop and Iris Blanco-Urgelles and five percussionists, under the leadership of Will Rapp.

Tickets may be purchased through the Miller Center for the Arts. (610.607.6270)

◇ **Sunday, December 6, 4pm Lessons and Carols**
Christ Episcopal Church

RCS will present a concert of Nine Lessons and Carols this Christmas season, made famous by the annual broadcast from King's College, Cambridge. In this program, the nine lessons remain the same each year, but the hymns and carols vary. Please join us for this concert which will include clergy and public officials as our readers of the lessons.

◇ **Saturday, December 12, 7pm Holiday Happenings**
Scottish Rite Masonic Cathedral

Reading Choral Society will join the Holiday Happenings Family Event which is hosted by the Scottish Rite Masonic Lodge each December. RCS will be presenting a concert of holiday music in the auditorium.

◇ **Sunday, January 31, 4pm**
Reading Liederkranz

Reading Choral Society has been invited by the Liederkranz to perform Brahms Requiem. This concert will feature several movements from the German Requiem and feature Mary Bishop on the piano and soloists.

For more information about these events, please check the RCS website.



Meet the RCS Artistic Staff



Graham Bier, RCS Music Director

Born in Western Pennsylvania, Graham was raised on a farm, but early on developed a love of music that befuddled the chickens. He attended Oberlin Conservatory of Music as an undergraduate and holds an MA from the University of York (UK) in ensemble singing. Graham has studied conducting with Daniel Moe, Joseph Cullen, Adrian Lucas, and Zhū Bū Xī. Alongside standard repertoire has conducted a variety of unusual pieces, from CATcerto with the University of York Concert Orchestra to the music for Converging Paths, a headphones-based theater piece by Slung Low held around a ruined castle. In 2012 he served as guest Chorusmaster for the BBC Philharmonic in a broadcast with the Pet Shop Boys. As a singer specializing in early music, Graham has performed across Europe, including work with Stile Antico, I Fagiolini, the Yorkshire Baroque Soloists, the Ebor Singers, and his own group Les Canards Chantants.

Graham enjoys a busy schedule as a musician, serving as Director of Music at Bryn Athyn Cathedral and lecturing in music at Bryn Athyn College, alongside his work as a singer. Recently, he has been a soloist with Big Apple Baroque and Choral Arts Philadelphia, and sings with numerous ensembles including Everlasting Voices, and The Crossing. A veritable musical glutton, he can also be spotted playing cornet for the Penn View Brass Band, and as a singer/guitarist with the bluegrass band The Hillbillies of Cohesion.

Our Music Director and Vocal Coaches work together with sessions in sight reading, voice training and other aspects of musical literacy that enable the Society members to continue to develop its musical abilities. They are a great team in helping to prepare the Society for its performances!



Julia Renee Sullivan, Vocal Coach

Julia Sullivan, soprano, is delighted to serve as a Vocal Coach for her first season with the Reading Choral Society. Julia is originally from Allentown, PA and currently sings and teaches throughout the Greater Philadelphia Area. Recent performances include appearances as a guest soprano soloist at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Glenside, PA. Julia has also sung professionally as a Principal Vocalist at Camp-of-the-Woods resort, singing variety concerts of Opera, Music Theatre, Pop, and Jazz. Awards and honors include receipt of a scholarship to study at the Songfest Apprentice Program in Malibu, CA and placement as a semi-finalist in her division in the Central Region and Chicago Chapter NATS competitions. Julia is a certified teacher and taught music and English for three years in the School District of Philadelphia and at Prestige Academy Charter School in Wilmington, DE.

Julia earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Voice Performance from the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music where she studied with Denise Gamez. She also holds a B.A. in English Literature from Wheaton College, a M.S. in Education from the University of Pennsylvania, and a M.A. in Speech, Language, and Hearing Science from Temple University. Julia currently works full-time as a Speech-Language Pathologist for Genesis Rehab Services at Berks Heim in Leesport.



Roderick Nevin, Vocal Coach

Having been a member of the bass section in the Reading Choral Society since 2004, Rod is very pleased to be working with the tenors and basses as a Vocal Coach this year. He received his Bachelor of Music degree at Mansfield University in 1996, and a Master's degree in Music Education at West Chester University in 2004.

Rod has been teaching General Music and Chorus at Mt. Penn Elementary since 1999, where he also directs the Boys' Barbershop, Girls' Ensemble, and Recorder Consort groups. He has also directed the pit orchestra for Antietam High School's musicals, as well as being music director for the Antietam Community Theater's production of The Music Man. He currently lives in Pennside with his wife and two children.

When he's not singing with the RCS, you may find Rod as a member of the Hamilton Celtic Pipes and Drums, where he has taken up playing bagpipes, or at New Life Bible Fellowship Church in Oley, where he plays trombone in the New Life Brass, or in his garage at home, where he makes his own homebrew.

2015-16 Business & Foundation Patrons



“Thank you for helping RCS stay strong for 140 years!”

Thank you to all our patrons. Your support has kept our music going strong for 140 years. We are grateful for all you do for RCS!

Special thanks to:

Penske Truck Leasing
 Sponsor of Carmina Burana concert



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Singing since 1875

Founded in 1875, the Reading Choral Society is one of America's oldest musical ensembles, and from its earliest days has pursued performances characterized by vocal excellence and musical distinction. Under its current director, Graham Bier (the twelfth person to hold this position), approximately 70 dedicated semi-professional singers perform in the RCS. Through the RCS performances, the members enrich and enliven the musical life of the greater Reading community and the surrounding counties.



Brahms Requiem, April 2015

Historical Fact about RCS:

Reading Choral Society did not have performances during WWI due to most male voices being a part of the armed forces. RCS didn't want to compromise the Society's high standards by having concerts without male voices a part of the performance.

Cheers to 140 Years! Gala Event at PSU Berks

Sunday, November 22, 12-3pm

Join Members of Reading Choral Society at this event to celebrate their 140th Anniversary Celebration. Bring your friends and join us for a fabulous afternoon including Music, Food, Drink \$50 per person

Reservations are necessary to attend since space is limited.

Silent & Live Auction to include:

Fly fishing trip on the Madison River in Montana

Week vacation in Rockport, Maine

Weekend stay in the Berkshires

Overnight Golf Getaway at Woodloch Golf Resort

Queen Size Quilt—Mariner's Compass

Wine basket

Wooden Bowls

And many more items.

Hope you will be able to attend our Celebration at PSU Berks!



Eric Whitaker's 5 tips for improving your choral singing:

1. "Learn as much of the music as you can so that your head isn't buried in your copy."
2. "Read the text, bathe in it and then sing with expression and meaning, and in phrases and lines as the text requires."
3. "Listen to each other: hearing what is going on around you, next to you, near you is just as important as whatever the conductor is doing in front of you."
4. "Make the most of delicious words and consonants, querying the diction with your director for these and vowel sounds."
5. "Enjoy, and let the audience hear and see you enjoy singing; it's one of the most visceral things we can share. I don't know if it is a spiritual, physiological or psychological phenomenon, but I believe now more than ever that singing is a universal, built-in mechanism designed to cultivate empathy and compassion."

Article posted by Grant Rowledge in Classical