

## THINKING ABOUT MOZART

By John Alston,  
CCC Artistic Director

Our Concert Choir has been learning Mozart's *Requiem* since the summer, and for all but three singers, it has been a new experience. *Requiem*, surely the best 45 minutes in classical music, brings out the best in the children and me. We concentrate more, are willing to rehearse longer, and more children ask to repeat difficult passages (we say 'break it down' or 'slow it up') because they want to get it right.

The great surprise for me this season has been discovering how many of the children want to know more about the text and translation, and appreciate how Mozart's music reflects and amplifies words and meaning. And while we've always had a deep emotional connection to our music making, many of the children are now developing a genuine, intellectual relationship to *Requiem*.

In January, we learned the difficult opening movement, "Requiem aeternam"—eternal rest. When discussing the Latin text, sometimes the children write down the translations, but more often, I ask them to memorize the meaning of important Latin words. By now, they know that "et lux per-

petua luceat eis" means "and perpetual light shine upon them." This text appears three times in the opening movement. In the first two settings, Mozart, expectedly, writes lighter and more transparent music, decidedly contrasting with the preceding darker music. The children nodded their heads with understanding as I explained this. The third "et lux" setting is, however, at first glance, curious. The music is dark, seems to struggle to its end, and the timpani plays the final moment, sounding not like perpetual light, but more like approaching death.

As the children thought about the incongruity, Zoe, a very bright 8th grade alto, frowned, clearly bothered that Mozart seemed to be ignoring the poetry. I explained that Mozart was 35 years old, sick and dying as he wrote *Requiem*, and probably not sure of an afterlife filled with perpetual light. He was feverish, terrified, and struggled to complete the piece as death approached. Zoe's frown and concern gradually gave way to understanding and relief as she began to appreciate how the music reflected Mozart's emotional state. Of course Mozart knew what he was doing.

*continued inside*

## UPCOMING CONCERTS

**Sunday, March 18, 3:00 p.m.**

Mozart's *Requiem*, Lang Concert Hall  
Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA  
Reserved seating. Register at:  
<https://cccrequiem.brownpapertickets.com/>

**Sunday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.**

Westtown School Theatre  
975 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA

**Friday, May 11 &  
Saturday, May 12, 7:30 p.m.**

Spring Concerts, Lang Concert Hall  
Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA  
Reserved seating. Register after April 2 at:  
<https://cccspring2018.brownpapertickets.com/>

**Saturday, May 19, 7:30 p.m.**

Nativity BVM Church  
30 East Franklin Street, Media, PA

**ADMISSION IS FREE!  
DONATIONS SUPPORT CCC PROGRAMS.**



**FAMILIES—SAVE THE DATE  
TO SIGN UP FOR OUR  
2018-2019 SEASON!**

**Friday, April 27, 2018, 5:30-8:00 p.m.**

Registration & Open House  
CCC Office, 112 Park Avenue  
Swarthmore, PA

## THINKING ABOUT MOZART

*continued*

On March 18, our Concert Choir will perform Mozart's *Requiem* with a professional orchestra and soloists, and adult community singers, 'Friends of the CCC.' The performance will certainly be a thrilling and moving experience for all of us. Our children will feel safe and sing more confidently intermingled with adults, and for the few hours of rehearsal and performance, a very small part of the world will be as it should be, rather than as it could be.

I do hope that our guest singers and the audience will notice and appreciate how thoughtfully our Chester children sing. If, during the performance, you find yourself wondering about a particular musical-textual passage, find Zoe after the concert, and she'll probably be able to explain it to you.



Concert choir member  
Zoe Gainer.

## GOING SOLO—CCC's Voice Students

"Singing to the back of the church, and make sure you fill all of the space in between!" This CCC rehearsal is very different because the stage is empty and quiet, with the exception of a piano and a solo Chorus member.

Some of you may not know that eight Concert Choir students are taking private voice lessons with their teacher, Tracy Sturgis. Not every singer is interested in trying it alone, but for the students who are, private lessons give them a chance to learn more about technique, solo repertoire, and a performance experience.

"Teaching the girls in the CCC has been such an honor," Ms. Sturgis explained, "I get so excited to see their enthusiasm about classical music. In lessons the girls learn about their voices by exploring different genres of music and learning a healthy approach to singing. Because they are taking private lessons, they become more knowledgeable and confident singers. They can take this confidence and skill into the choral setting and provide leadership in their sections."



Reviewing solo recital order.

My'rell, an 8th grader commented, "I think I'm a better singer now inside the choir. I can hear what I sound like and work toward fixing myself and then apply it to my choral singing." Tasia, an 11th grader, agreed. "You can't always hear yourself when you sing in the group."

Though they agreed they were initially more nervous singing solo, K'yana shared that solo work was easy to get used to. "I've sung with the CCC close to 10 years so it's more comfortable to sing solo. The focus is just different."

And Skyy, another 8th grader agreed, "I can hear a difference in my voice now. I understand how my breathing helps. But it's also helped me think about singing with character."

## OUR COMMITMENT TO THE CCC: *Charlene and Frank Millheim*

"We first heard the Chester Children's Chorus (CCC) in 2010 at a West Chester, PA church and were amazed by the quality of the performance. It was obvious from watching them that they are part of a community that supports and motivates them to learn and grow.

We later learned more about the program: the children are challenged with learning discipline and self-confidence in an after-school and Saturday choral music program, plus in a Summer Learning Program including math, science, reading, history, art and music."

As an amateur musician, Charlene is especially drawn to the fact that the primary

mission of the CCC is to assist children through musical participation, providing a life-altering experience of music, education and community that otherwise they would not have.



She noted, "We have become financial contributors as well as active promoters of the Chester Children's Chorus because of their mission. We want to support this unique gift to Chester

children, so we are planning to leave a legacy gift to Chester Children's Chorus."

*To learn more about making a legacy gift to the CCC, contact Cynthia Staniszewski at 610-690-5533.*



## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

CCC's summer learning program begins Monday, June 25 and runs through Wednesday, August 1. We are looking for readers, math coaches, and other camp assistance. Volunteers must be 18 or older. For more information, please contact executive director Kirsten Halker-Kratz at 610-328-8286 or by email at [khalker1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:khalker1@swarthmore.edu).



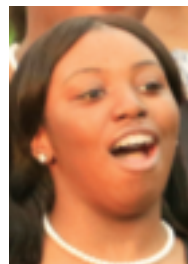
## JAAMI'A BOYER 6 years in the CCC

**Favorite songs:** *Blessed is Your Name, I'm Not Done, & Spain.*

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** Yes, I remember, but I wasn't nervous. I was actually excited!

**Favorite memory:** When we went to Lake Garrison

**Future plans:** I want to be a pediatrician.



## AMIL GIBBS 10 years in the CCC

**Favorite songs:** *Still Climbing the Same Mountain, Dear Martin, Whisper* and Mozart "Agnus Dei."

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** I was in training chorus in the front row with the biggest black and white ballies in my hair. Yes, I was nervous because there were so many people in the crowd.

**Favorite memory:** All of my memories are my favorite. I love being with my CCC family and I will miss it!

**Future plans:** I plan to go to the Air Force & study computer science. And then go to College and get my degree in Psychology.



## CIAZSA DAVIS 4 years in the CCC

**Favorite songs:** *Hero, Blessed is Your Name, Africa, A Little More Love, Mozart Requiem, O Fortuna.*

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** My first performance was in the summer, and I wasn't nervous. I actually had a lot of fun, and I was never nervous for any concerts.

**Favorite memory:** My favorite memory was last summer when we went to the lake and had so much fun. We all played like kids and played squish the lemon. When we rode the bus there, K'eymbrah was screaming because she was so scared of the bridge, and Butter's phone almost flew out the window. It was the funniest day that summer. And, I liked when we sang on the bus rides home every day in the summer after camp.

**Future plans:** I'm going to college to become a Nurse Practitioner and later have my own practice. I also want to have my own baking business on the side.

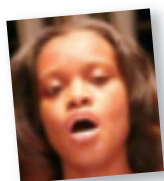
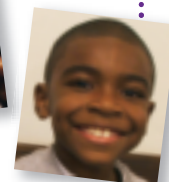
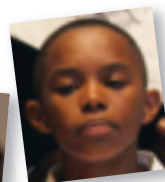
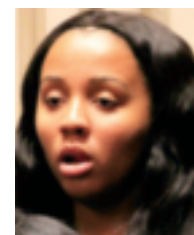
## KELLIE HARRIS 9 years in the CCC

**Favorite song:** One of Us is my favorite song because I liked how the alto has the little solo in it.

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** I don't remember my first performance clearly, but I remember I was really nervous but okay because I had friends around me.

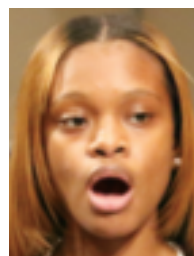
**Favorite memory:** My favorite memory was when I went out with the workout crew, and we went to the movies to watch *Fast and Furious 7*.

**Future plans:** I will be going to Kutztown University this summer, to study social media and strategy.



# CELEBRATING OUR 2018 HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Pictured left to right, Jaami'a, Ciaza, Asia, K'Yana, Amil, Kellie, Reggie and Wendell—each from their early years with the CCC.



## ASIA MCDONALD 6 years with the CCC

**Favorite song:** It's not a CCC song, but *Scars to Your Beautiful* is my favorite song because it brings me joy whenever I am feeling down.

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** Yes, my first performance was a tribute to Whitney Houston. I was a bit nervous at first because it was my first time in front of such a large crowd but the

nervousness quickly went away when I started singing.

**Favorite memory:** When I was in summer camp and we chased John with the water guns.

**Future plans:** I want to go to medical school to become an obstetrician.

## K'YANA REEVES 10 years in the CCC

**Favorite song:** *Blessed is Your Name*, because it's a collaboration of all of our names, and it shows just how beautiful we are.

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** It was fun, I wasn't nervous. I kept looking at the crowd.

**Favorite memory:** The concerts: all of them because I love being on stage, and it's fun to sing with your friends and have fun together, and I liked working with the younger students.

**Future plans:** Studying music hopefully at Duke, Spelman or Hampton.



## REGGIE STANFORD 6 years in the CCC

**Favorite song:** *Psalms 123* has always been my favorite song because it the first song I knew by the CCC before I joined.

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** The first time I performed with the CCC I believe I was excited because this was something new to me and more coordinated.

**Favorite memory:** My favorite memory is when we sprayed John with waterguns on his birthday.

**Future plans:** I plan to attend Lincoln University and work towards a degree in Business & Administration, to eventually attain a chain of barbershops all over the Tri-state area.

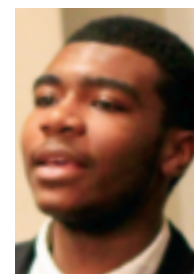
## WENDELL WIMBUSH 10 years in the CCC

**Favorite song:** *I Can* has to be my favorite song because of the message.

**Do you remember your first performance? Were you nervous?** My first performance I was really nervous, but I remember just wanting to sing my heart out.

**First memory:** My first memory of the choir was me trying out, I was hesitant at first but I'm glad I tried because I grew to love the choir.

**Future plans:** I plan to major in criminal justice and help my community.



**SUPPORT US!** I am pleased to make a contribution to the Chester Children's Chorus in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Enclosed is a check (Check made payable to "Swarthmore College" with "Chester Children's Chorus" in memo field.)

☐ I would like to make a monthly gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have remembered the CCC in my will.

☐ Please charge my gift to

- ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard  
☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

☐ My gift will be matched by my employer.  
(Please enclose your signed matching gift form.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

To give online, visit our website  
[www.chesterchildrenschorus.org](http://www.chesterchildrenschorus.org),  
and select "Volunteer or Give!"

For information, call director of development  
Cynthia Staniszewski at (610) 690-5533.  
Please return this form to our address below.



**THANK YOU!**

## CHESTER CHILDREN'S CHORUS

John Alston, founder and artistic director  
Kirsten Halker-Kratz, executive director  
Sean Tripline, assistant music director  
Cynthia Staniszewski, director of development  
Elisa DeNofio, administrative assistant

If you have received an extra copy  
of this newsletter, please notify  
us at 610-328-8180 and  
share the copy with a friend.

### Voice credits:

Editor:  
Kirsten Halker-Kratz  
Designer:  
Karlyn Rosen Aires

Photography:  
John Wehmiller  
Andrea Knox  
Jonathan Hodgson

## CCC STAFF SPOTLIGHT:



### Todd Perrine

We are very fortunate to have a team of excellent van drivers with long tenures with the CCC. This has helped create strong, nurturing relationships with our students. We took some time to interview one of our drivers, Todd Perrine, who also works as a College van driver.

#### It appears that you have been with us for 7 years, going on 8. How has the CCC changed since you started?

It has changed rather dramatically. To begin, the choir has doubled in size since when I arrived, and the music has become more intricate and demanding in every way. John has created an atmosphere where each child, after learning each piece of music, is required to focus and listen. Blending sound while performing is no small feat. He is constantly reinforcing that and many other aspects of their development. Discipline and focus are paramount. And of course, the rewards are seen and heard in their performances. John's vision and approach are uniquely his, and they consistently produce a winning combination.

The addition of Sean Tripline has been very positive for CCC and the children. They love him and his choice of music. Actually, we all enjoy him and his musical choices.

Finally, the addition of Kirsten was both strategically and artistically a fortunate move by the CCC. She is a major reason why the CCC remains functional both daily and long-term. She is also an exceptional pianist and organist.

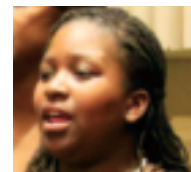
#### What do you enjoy the most about working with the CCC?

I love watching how the CCC changes the lives of the children in many remarkable ways, and how their vision of the future becomes much more positive. They become engulfed in a team spirit.

#### Are you a musician?

Yes, I've played drums in bands for about 8 years. I had been studying classical piano after about 5 years of drumming, so I decided to change over to keyboards and guitar for another 9 years.

**CCC "NOTE-ABLE"** Lay'la Harmon, concert choir alto, was chosen by the Chester Rotary to attend Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) conference February 9th through 11th, 2018. RYLA aims to provide an effective training experience for selected youth and potential leaders.



### Become a Sostenuto Circle Monthly Donor!

The Sostenuto Circle is a simple, affordable and automatic way to continually support the Chester Children's Chorus and insure future financial security and stability for musical excellence and education!

**sostenuto:**  
Italian, 'sustained.'

**\$20 a month:** Provides a Chromebook for afterschool academic support.

**\$35 a month:** Provides one keyboard kit, which includes the keyboard, music stand, bench, headphones and pedal.

**\$50 a month:** Provides a year of healthy snacks and rehearsal meals for one CCC member.

#### HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

- Sign up at [www.swarthmore.edu/chester-childrens-chorus/gift](http://www.swarthmore.edu/chester-childrens-chorus/gift) and commit to a monthly gift amount that is either charged to your credit card or debited from your bank account.
- You may contact us at any time to make a change.
- After the initial payment, your credit card or bank account will be charged automatically each month
- For tax purposes, you'll receive an acknowledgement after your first payment and a tax statement at the end of the calendar year.

