



Dear Friends of Berkshire Lyric,

2020 has been an extraordinary year for Berkshire Lyric and all other performing groups. Our final rehearsal took place on March 9. We were busy preparing for our annual Kick the Winter Blues Concerts. This year was to be an Irish theme with three of our choruses. We were also turning the corner on some very challenging music by Brahms and Bruckner as we looked forward to our May 24<sup>th</sup> return to Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood. This annual Masterwork concert was to feature the tremendous Bruckner Te Deum, joined again by a full orchestra. As the year moved on, we had to cancel our Young Singers concert in May as well as the summer activities of Ubi Caritas. Still unable to meet and sing this fall and winter, we have suspended regular rehearsals and cancelled our traditional Christmas concerts. All of this has been a loss for Berkshire lovers of fine choral music, and it has meant the loss of all of our regular ticket sales revenue for the year 2020.

You can tell much about the health of an organization by how they respond to a crisis. Berkshire Lyric has responded by being flexible and adaptable, by working hard to provide other musical connections with the community.

- Ubi Caritas has for many years raised money for area food pantries, with three live concerts on the first Sunday of August. This year, this talented group put together a virtual concert that premiered August 17<sup>th</sup>. The entire proceeds of over \$3000 were divided between three local food banks. We found a way to give away a lot when we did not have much. You can view that video on our website.

-Over the summer we presented 3 different Online Summer Music Workshops: The History of Western Choral Music led by Jack Brown; Music Theory Fundamentals by Anson Olds; and The Home Music Studio and the New Technologies by Joe Rose. Each course lasted six weeks. It was a low cost, but high-quality series, that we will adapt to continue after the pandemic.

-This fall both the Berkshire Lyric Chorus and the Lyric Children's Chorus have resumed gathering Monday evenings over Zoom. We are producing a Virtual Christmas Concert Film to be aired on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. This video will combine new virtual performances with the best moments from our extensive archive of Christmas concerts. Our talented John Demler will weave in some theatrical holiday readings.

-For the winter and spring of 2021, we will continue our Monday night online gatherings to explore great choral music. We'll combine music history, music theory and vocal training with online sing-ins of a variety of masterpieces. We will continue to provide an online Saturday morning gathering place for the children in our young chorus. We will start new regular online vocal study opportunities for our Melodious Accord singers and our Berkshire Lyric Choral Scholars. Jack will bring what he has learned doing online voice lessons at Hotchkiss and Simon's Rock and provide to small groups of our own local teenagers at no cost.

2020 has been about adapting and being creative, but also about maintaining community and finding new ways to engage with quality music. In 2021, we are set to come back as strong as ever by again presenting memorable concerts. With the help of donors like you, we will continue this 57-year legacy, remaining true to our vision of great choral singing in the Berkshires.

We are always mindful of our organizational objectives to:

- encourage the art of fine choral singing by presenting high quality performances of a wide range of music – classical, folk, pop, jazz, and contemporary.
- provide training, practice, and performance opportunities for the development of vocal talent
- provide scholarship opportunities for talented young singers
- provide free musical opportunities to children of all backgrounds

There are numerous levels at which you can contribute. Each contribution is tax deductible and greatly appreciated. It could be \$500 or \$50, but it will all add up to sustain this singular Berkshire music institution. We hope that we can count on your continued support. If you'd be willing to help, please send checks made out to Berkshire Lyric to PO Box 347, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

More information about Berkshire Lyric along with photos and videos may be found on our new web site at [www.berkshirelyric.org](http://www.berkshirelyric.org). Thank you for your generous support!

Sincerely, Amy Najimy

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Najimy".

Berkshire Lyric Board President

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