

2018

The Tie That Binds: The History, Conductors, And Music Of The Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival

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THE TIE THAT BINDS: THE HISTORY, CONDUCTORS, AND MUSIC
OF THE MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in

Conducting

School of Music

University of South Carolina

2018

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FOREWORD

This document is part of the dissertation requirement for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting. The major portion of the dissertation consists of four public recitals. Copies of the recital programs are at the end of this paper.

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my wife, Ellen Douglas Merritt, for all her support, and to the Rev. James L. Pratt, founder of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. As a participant in the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival as a child and as conductor of the forty-ninth year festival in 2017, I continue to grow as a musician. Finally, I dedicate this paper to my good friend, Michael Noonan, who has worked tirelessly over the past twenty-five years or more to see that the festival continues to thrive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the advice and guidance of my major professor Dr. Larry Wyatt. I would also like to acknowledge the other members of my advisory committee, Dr. Alicia Walker, Dr. Andrew Gowan, and Dr. J. Daniel Jenkins, for their advice and encouragement. I thank the staff of the University of South Carolina Music Library for their assistance in locating research materials.

I acknowledge the singers of the University of South Carolina Graduate Vocal Ensemble, USC University Chorus, and USC Summer Chorus for participating in my dissertation recitals. I also acknowledge the singers and instrumentalists who participated in the 2017 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, including my niece, Sarah Ellen Merritt, a graduating senior who sang in the festival, and my brother Stephen Merritt, who accompanied some of the pieces on guitar and bass. The singers in all of these ensembles were attentive in rehearsals and performed skillfully during the performances. Many thanks to my home church, Noank Baptist Church, and the Rev. Dr. Paul Hayes, pastor, for hosting the 2017 festival.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for supporting and encouraging me to pursue this degree, especially my parents, the late Eugene and Catherine Merritt, my wife, my brothers and sisters, and a very special colleague, the late Julius (Sandy) Beam, without whose encouragement I may not have pursued or finished this degree.

ABSTRACT

The Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, which began in 1968, is now in its 50th year. The festival is sponsored each year by the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. The festival combines multi-generational choirs from numerous churches in and around the coastal villages of Noank and Mystic in Connecticut. Numerous nationally recognized choral directors, composers, and clinicians have been invited to guest conduct the choirs of the festival. For festival milestones, new choral pieces are commissioned.

This research project explores the history of church choirs in New England, beginning with mandated singing of metrical psalms, the singing schools which started in Boston, and the formation of the Handel and Haydn society of Boston and the Boston Academy of Music (which ultimately led to the development of music education in the Boston public schools.) College singing groups such as the Harvard University and Yale University Glee Clubs in the 19th century and an *a cappella* singing movement in the early 20th century also contributed fertile ground for formation of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in 1968.

This paper documents the history of the festival through five developmental periods including its leadership, both clergy and laity. A record of the prominent conductors of the festival is provided. Important music associated with the festival is detailed, as is significant information related to yearly planning. An analysis of transferrable characteristics of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival is provided to potentially aid other communities in starting successful choir festivals.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, RATIONALE, AND LIMITATIONS

On March 11, 2018, choir members from ten churches in the coastal villages in Noank and Mystic, Connecticut and surrounding areas banded together for a joyous weekend of music and fellowship in the fiftieth-year celebration of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. There were close to one hundred singers. The event began on Friday evening with guest clinician Dr. Lynnel Joy Jenkins rehearsing the adult participants in the Festival. Rehearsals resumed for 50 children and youth on Saturday morning, and ran throughout the day until late in the afternoon. On Sunday, everyone joined together for a final rehearsal to put the finishing touches on the music and then the festival concert, formatted as a joint worship service, began at 4:00 p.m. Approximately 350 to 400 citizens from the wider community attended the event, hosted this year by the Union Baptist Church in Mystic, Connecticut.

While the festival has had some modifications over time, for the last 25 years or more it has followed roughly the same format. Periodically, funds are raised to commission a special choral piece for specific festivals. With 2018 being the fiftieth year of the festival, an announcement was made at the festival concert on March, 12, 2017, that Allen Pote, a nationally-known composer of church music, had already been commissioned to compose a new piece to commemorate this occasion.

The Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in 2017 took place at the Noank Baptist Church, in Noank, Connecticut. There were approximately 150 singers involved

(third-grade children to adult) from eleven churches. In addition to churches in Noank and Mystic, there were churches from Stonington, North Stonington, and Groton in Connecticut, as well as churches from nearby Westerly, Rhode Island, about nine miles from Mystic. Denominations included Baptist, Roman Catholic, Congregational (United Church of Christ), Episcopal, and Presbyterian. Approximately four hundred people attended the festival concert. The audience/congregation participated in the singing of congregational hymns, accompanied by the organ and a brass ensemble, and a Psalm with a sung refrain. As will be fleshed out later, the singing of Psalms in the churches of New England dates back to the worship of the Puritans in the seventeenth century. Three choral selections were performed by combined choirs of forty-two children and youth grades three to twelve. One piece was performed by the high school singers grades nine to twelve. Three pieces were performed by the assembled adult choir, and three selections were performed by all festival singers.

Noank Baptist Church has hosted the festival many times. With the organ and choir loft located in the rear balcony, logistical considerations must be made as to where all the singers will be located during the concert. For the 2017 festival performance, the adult choirs were positioned along the two side galleries and the children and youth singers were at the front of the church.

1.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND PROBLEM

Sally Albrecht, a composer, clinician and editor for Alfred Music, having conducted the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in 2012, wrote a short blog about the experience a few weeks later and posted it on the Alfred Music website. After giving a very brief synopsis of the history of the festival, and reflecting on her experience

conducting it, Albrecht issued a challenge: “I encourage each and every one of you to create or organize a similar experience in your area.”¹ At a time in the United States where the trend seems to be so heavy toward disbanding choirs and discarding organs as liturgical instruments in favor of popular-style worship bands, this challenge points to the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival as a potential model in rejecting that trend. Each year the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival reminds the community of the important benefits that community singing provides. The Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival gives the singing participants, whose church choirs generally number twenty or fewer, the pleasure of singing in a large chorus each year.

Personal experience has demonstrated that starting a festival that combines numerous singers from multiple churches of various denominations is a somewhat daunting task. Directors of church choirs often are either volunteers or employed in part-time positions. Unless such an event is made a priority, it is likely that no such event will happen. As we will examine, organizing a festival requires a great deal of cooperation, commitment, hard work, and long-range planning. Albrecht’s encouraging words serve as both a challenge and a validation to explore what is both worthwhile and duplicable in the example of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. This research will scrutinize indispensable characteristics of the festival that the leaders (both past and present) believe exist and will attempt to determine if the possibility exists for those ingredients to be successfully utilized elsewhere.

¹ Sally Albrecht, “Together in Song... an Ecumenical Experience,” *Ledger Lines* (blog), June 7, 2012, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://alfredledgerlines.wordpress.com/2012/06/07/together-in-song-an-ecumenical-experience/>.

1.3 REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Research for this document includes the important back story of choral music in the United States, particularly in New England, which both inspired and made possible the formation of the Mystic Area Choir Festival. This research documents how, after almost two centuries of mandated Psalm singing in the churches, other forms of musical expression in worship began to take hold. To fully appreciate the circumstances surrounding the framework of choirs in the churches of New England during the 1960s, one must give a careful look back to the nineteenth century.

It was during the nineteenth century that formal music education rose out of singing schools, the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, and the Boston Academy of Music. Spearheaded by individuals such as Thomas Hastings, William Woodbridge, Lowell Mason, and Samuel Atkins Eliot, public school music education first became a reality in Boston and then spread to other states, including Connecticut. National music teacher organizations formed to aid teachers in carrying out their work. The meetings of these organizations also served as a venue for school choirs to perform. Trends such as the high school *a cappella* choir movement came into being.

Choral societies and festivals, which had been a part of the culture in England, also began to form in the United States with a similar purpose. Of great significance is the emergence of glee clubs on the campuses of major universities in the United States, first at Harvard University, then the University of Michigan, and Yale University. The Glee Club tradition in the United States loosely follows those in England dating back to the eighteenth century, but began shifting focus to a higher standard of artistic expression early in the twentieth century. The direct influences of the Glee Clubs at both Harvard

University and Yale University are significant to understanding the climate in which the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival came about.

All of these institutions began over one hundred years prior to the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival's beginning and were well-established by the mid-1960s. With the success of music education and collegiate singing, a pool of musically-trained singers having graduated from America's secondary schools and colleges were looking for venues to continue their singing. Academic programs of study began to form in which musicians were trained to build and direct church music programs that included adult volunteer church choirs of mixed voices, youth choirs and children's choirs. Westminster Choir College and St. Olaf College were pioneers in this endeavor.

The cooperative spirit among the churches in the Noank and Mystic area in Connecticut, resulting from their local minister's association and ecumenical council, suggests a study of the ecumenical movement as it grew in the twentieth century. Although it is a reasonable assumption that none of these influences can be singled out as the sole preparation for the ripe conditions needed to start the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in the mid-1960s, it can be hypothesized that they worked together to foster the perfect environment.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

A study of how the Christian faith and the history of Western music are intertwined will be limited to those factors that impact the story of music in the churches of New England. For example, the long choral tradition in Europe will be narrowed to those aspects that drive the beginnings of choral singing in the United States. Also, while there were singing schools outside of New England, those singing schools will be

considered outside the scope of this study and may be a suitable topic on their own. While much can be explored and written about this, a more narrow focus of this paper will include hymnology and music that aided in fostering the growth of the ecumenical movement in the United States. Of major significance were the modern denominational hymnals of the early twentieth century, which all included a large selection of the same hymns from a variety of Christian traditions. There were cultural implications to the modern church music program as seen in the 1960s. This paper will reflect on how a church music program, which involved volunteer choirs led by trained directors, became symbolic of success in middle-class American churches and how the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival benefitted greatly from that phenomenon.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival will be viewed through many lenses in this paper. Before there was an organized, annual event that involved multiple church choirs, there were several one-time events where many of the local churches gathered together for hymn singing and other occasions where multiple choirs joined forces to perform major choral works. The history of the early years of the Festival, primarily under the leadership of local church music directors, will also be discussed. Much of this history has been provided through interviews with the Rev. James L. Pratt, *Emeritus* Minister of the Noank Baptist Church, who is considered to be the founder of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in 1968, and who worked closely with the festival until his retirement in 2000. An updated copy of the Festival Library List was provided by the festival leadership and is included as Appendix A in this document. A brief history of the history of ecumenical music endeavors of Mystic area

churches is included in each year's festival program. That brief history is included as Appendix B in this document.

After the beginning of the festival, its history and growth in prominence and popularity will be considered. What had been mostly an event involving churches has recast itself as both a cultural and educational event for the wider community. A description will be given how, with its growing popularity, the festival organizers began bringing in nationally-known choral conductors and composers of church music as clinicians to lead the festival rehearsals, concert, and workshop. Biographical information of several high-profile conductor/clinicians and a discussion of the music used throughout the history of the festival will also be given. Special attention will be given to pieces of music commissioned for or premiered at the festival.

For more recent history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, recent programs, newspaper articles, and interviews with the principal leadership of the festival are utilized. Also, a lengthy interview with Michael G. Noonan, Music Director of North Congregational Church, and a co-chairman of the festival for over twenty years, provides valuable details. This narrative will include commentary on the planning process, the normal schedule of events and procedures that are followed each year as the festival continues. It will also reflect personal reaction of this writer as having been a participant in the festival for many years and then having returned in 2017 to conduct.

1.5 SUMMARY

This paper will examine, as fully as possible whether it is plausible for other areas to start a festival of their own like the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the history and operating procedures of the Mystic

Area Ecumenical Choir festival to determine what makes it successful, and to provide insight as to how others may be able to start successful multi-church choir festivals of their own.

CHAPTER 2

SINGING IN NEW ENGLAND: IN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Some of the earliest music of the church centers around poetic texts found in Holy Scriptures: the Psalms and Canticles. There are one hundred and fifty Psalms in the Old Testament, and they cover a variety of subjects, including praises to God, singing and confession. There are a few more than two dozen canticles in the bible. For the purpose of this paper, the definition of a canticle shall be a poetic passage or song from scripture that is not contained in one of the poetic books of the bible. Well-known canticles include the *Magnificat* (Song of Mary), *Nunc Dimittis* (Song of Simeon), and four songs from the Old Testament book of Isaiah.

2.1 METRICAL PSALMS

After the Protestant reformation in 1517, the reformed churches in Germany sang newly composed hymns with original, poetic texts. Psalm singing tradition continued in reformed churches influenced by leaders such as John Calvin (1509–1564) and Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531). Singing metrical Psalms also was practiced in the Church of England (Anglican) tradition after the English Reformation. For many years an English collection of metrical Psalms published by Thomas Sternhold and John Hopkins in the middle of the sixteenth century were employed for the use of Psalm singing in the Church of England. This collection of metrical Psalms is most often referred to as *Sternhold and Hopkins*.

The early New England churches also followed the practice of singing metrical psalms in worship as it had been mandated by the king and leaders of the Church of England. However, it does not appear that the Puritans were merely carrying on a tradition from their homeland with regard to Psalm singing. As early American music scholar Glenda Goodman writes: “Puritans believed psalmody created a channel between the singer and God: by singing, the devout glorified and praised God, but through singing, the worshipper was also brought closer to the divine.”²

After the Pilgrims arrived in New England, the churches sought to develop a new collection of metrical psalms. The result was their own translation, the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640). In creating their own translation of metrical Psalms, Puritans departed from all the authorities over the church in England, the king and bishop, to create a Psalter more fitting for their less-sophisticated manner of worship. Hymnology experts Harry Eskew and Hugh McElrath point out, the “Puritan ministers sought to provide in the *Bay Psalm Book* a rendering of the psalms that was smoother and closer to the original Hebrew than those of Sternhold and Hopkins.”³ Literary expert Amy Morris describes the perceived benefits of the new psalter as the Puritans may have viewed it: “This new metrical Psalter was designed to complement the plain style sermons and the unscripted prayers that replaced the Book of Common Prayer in New England churches.”⁴ According to Eskew and McElrath, the *Bay Psalm Book* was “the first book of any kind to be printed in British

² Glenda Goodman, “The Tears I Shed at the Songs of Thy Church”: Seventeenth-Century Musical Piety in the English Atlantic World,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (Fall 2012): 692.

³ Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 110.

⁴ Amy Morris, “The Art of Purifying: The Bay Psalm Book and Colonial Puritanism,” *Early American Literature* 42, no. 1 (2007): 108.

North America.”⁵ The stark difference between the Sternhold and Hopkins translation of the metrical Psalter and *The Bay Psalm Book* are shown Figure 1.1: Comparison of Psalm 23: 1–2.

<i>Sternhold and Hopkins</i> ⁶	<i>Bay Psalm Book</i> ⁷
1 The Lord is only my support, and he that doth me feed; How can I then lack any thing, whereof I stand in need?	1 The Lord to me a shepherd is, Want therefore I shall not,
2 In pastures green he feedeth me, where I do safely lie, And after leads me to the streams which run most pleasantly.	2 He in the folds of tender grass Doth make me down to lie To waters calm he gently leads Restore my soul doth he

Figure 1.1: Comparison of Psalm 23: 1–2

In comparing these two verses from *Sternhold and Hopkins* and the *Bay Psalm Book*, it appears that the *Bay Psalm Book* in its simplicity could be viewed as having achieved a more accurate translation into English, but it is questionable if the text is smoother for use in singing, as Eskew and McElrath indicated.⁸

2.2 THE SINGING SCHOOLS

The use of *The Bay Psalm Book* and the practice of singing psalms exclusively in the worship of the Puritan (Congregational) churches continued for close to two centuries in New England. At least twenty-seven editions (the last in 1748) of the book were made, including editions that included musical notation as well as the metrical Psalm texts beginning as early as the ninth edition in 1698.⁹ In spite of that, winds of change were already swirling early in the eighteenth century. The ideas of the Enlightenment had been

⁵ Eskew and McElrath, *Sing with Understanding*, 110.

⁶ “Psalm 23,” Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter, last modified July 29, 2004, accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/oldver_frame.htm.

⁷ “Psalm 23,” The Bay Psalm Book, last modified July 29, 2004, accessed October 24, 2017, http://www.cgmusic.org/workshop/baypsalm_frame.htm.

⁸ Eskew and McElrath, *Sing with Understanding*, 109.

⁹ D. W. Krummel, “The Bay Psalm Book Tercentenary, 1698–1998,” *Notes* 55, no. 2 (December 1998): 282, 283–84.

moving thought in a more progressive manner for several years, while the first Great Awakening, a revivalist movement, had aspects of resistance to such change.¹⁰ While the *Bay Psalm Book* addressed certain perceived needs of the churches from a pragmatic standpoint, as society progressed and the church progressed as a part of society, the music and the singing in the churches became a matter of discontent. Early in the eighteenth century, singing schools began to form:

The singing school arose as a reform movement in early eighteenth-century New England. Harvard-educated ministers sought to improve what they regarded as poor congregational singing by teaching their people to read music instead of singing by ear.¹¹

To elaborate on the poor quality of the singing, Eskew and McElrath state “one Massachusetts minister (Thomas Walter) described congregational singing as “an horrid Medley of confused and disorderly Noises.”¹² Walter was one of the clergy pioneers in the singing school movement, and another was the Rev. Thomas Symmes. By 1720, a system had been worked out that Symmes called “Regular singing or Singing by rule.”¹³ This name and the ideas associated with it seem to have been initiated in a published essay by Symmes in 1720, called *The Reasonableness of Regular Singing; or, Singing by Note*.¹⁴ A year later, the first method book *An Introduction to the Singing of Psalm Tunes*, by a pastor named John Tufts was in print.¹⁵

¹⁰ David M. Miller, “The Beginnings of Music in the Boston Public Schools: Decisions of the Boston School Committee in 1837 and 1845 in Light of Religious and Moral Concerns of the Time” (PhD diss., University of North Texas, 1989), 50–56, accessed March 14, 2017, ProQuest.

¹¹ Eskew and McElrath, *Sing with Understanding*, 155.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Paul R. Osterhout, “Note Reading and Regular Singing in Eighteenth-Century New England,” *American Music* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 126.

¹⁴ Osterhout, “Note Reading,” 142.

¹⁵ Eskew and McElrath, *Sing with Understanding*, 155.

2.3 THE BEGINNING OF MUSIC EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND

By 1798, the musical culture in New England, particularly around Boston, saw further progress. The restrictive rules on using only Psalms in worship (and the lack of artistry that went with them) were going away. However for some, the music in New England still left a lot to be desired. Writer D. W. Krummel describes the situation:

Religious music was by now finding a distinctive voice in the new nation. As Calvinism declined, the repertory was no longer tied to the psalms. Church music in America may have sounded like that in England, but it was still the work of native composers. This is “You want music? You got music” music of Daniel Bayley, Supply Belcher, William Billings, Andrew Law, and other tunesmiths of the “first New England music school.”¹⁶

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, the singing schools received a cultural upgrade in the creation of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston (1815) and the formation of the Boston Academy of Music (1833).

Two individuals who contributed greatly to both of these organizations were Lowell Mason and Samuel Atkins Eliot. Mason, who had taught in the singing schools, served as conductor and president of the Boston Handel and Haydn Society from 1827–1832. Mason, along with George James Webb, was also important in founding the Boston Academy of Music.¹⁷ In addition to Mason’s musical leadership, musicologist Michael Broyles refers to a fund-raising effort in which a musical anthology published by Mason was used to assist the financially-struggling Handel and Haydn Society.¹⁸ This anthology, *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music*, later became the

¹⁶ Ibid., 126.

¹⁷ Melvin P. Unger, *Historical Dictionary of Choral Music* (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: the Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010), 287.

¹⁸ Michael Broyles, “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 1991), 460.

basis for published church hymnals.¹⁹ Samuel Eliot by 1835 was perhaps the most powerful among them. Not only had he become the president of the Boston Academy of Music, but from 1837–1839, he was also the mayor of Boston.²⁰

Both Elliot and Mason saw a need to educate the wider public in music. Mason, by then exclusively a church and community musician, wanted it for practical purposes, and Eliot sought it for more philosophical reasons. Eliot particularly believed that music was more than entertainment and reflected on the core principles of community and country.²¹ A committee was formed concerning music education in the Boston schools in the early 1830s. The committee was influenced by Mason, Eliot and another music education pioneer, William Woodbridge. Woodbridge was a Yale graduate who had traveled abroad and brought back educational ideas he had observed.²² The committee was able to approve the recommendation for formal music education in the Boston Schools without the fear of financial distress due to Lowell Mason's offer to teach as a volunteer in 1837. Mason had been a successful banker in Savannah, Georgia and then in Boston.²³ Mason had apparently amassed quite a fortune in banking. An example of his wealth is shown in a list of donors to the Boston Academy of Music. Of all the musician donors, Mason had the highest net worth, with real estate totaling \$16,000 and personal assets totaling \$25,000.²⁴ This year of volunteer music teaching was considered a great success, and a year later salaried music teaching positions were created within the Boston

¹⁹ Unger, *Historical Dictionary*, 287.

²⁰ Broyles, "Music and Class Structure," 453.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 475.

²² Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work*, Studies in Musicology, no. 86 (Ann Arbor, Mich: UMI Research Press, 1985), 63.

²³ Carol A. Pemberton, "Lowell Mason and His Mission," *Music Educators Journal* 78, no. 5 (January 1992): 49–50.

²⁴ Broyles, "Music and Class Structure," 470.

public schools, with Mason in leadership.²⁵ By 1845, however, Mason was out of leadership in the Boston public schools. There are various theories as to why he may have been abruptly dismissed, some related to accusations of religious bias and some related to financial matters.²⁶ Music education struggled in its infancy after Lowell Mason's departure. In 1859, after disbanding of the committee on music and then reforming it, music education resumed under the leadership of Dr. J. Baxter Upham, Luther Whiting Mason, and others with a rationale that teaching vocal music to school students physically developed the voice for speaking.²⁷

Perhaps the most important research on Lowell Mason's contribution to music education has been provided by Carol Pemberton in her Ph.D. thesis, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work*, and her subsequent publications. Pemberton credits Mason's grandson, Henry Lowell Mason, for providing significant materials that she utilized, including a biography of Mason that Henry Lowell had started but never completed before his death.²⁸

According to Pemberton, *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection* was highly successful, having twenty-two editions.²⁹ It was the success associated with this collection that gave Mason a platform to express his ideas regarding church music. Pemberton identifies six points that Mason gave in addresses to local churches about church music: 1. Simplicity of music and freedom from ornamentation, 2. Careful

²⁵ Miller, "The Beginnings," 3.

²⁶ Samuel L. Flueckiger, "Why Lowell Mason Left the Boston Schools," *Music Educators Journal* 22, no. 4 (February 1936): 20.

²⁷ Sondra Wieland Howe, "Music Teaching in the Boston Public Schools, 1864–1879," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 317.

²⁸ Carol Ann Pemberton, "Lowell Mason: His Life and Work" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1971), ix, accessed October 30, 2017, <https://search-proquest-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/pqdtglobal/docview/302629161/44A478D8D0FB460BPQ/1?accountid=13965>.

²⁹ Pemberton, "Lowell Mason: His Life," 106.

handling of the text, 3. Promotion of congregational singing, 4. Skilled choirs and accompanying instruments, particularly the organ, 5. Music education for all children, 6. Participation in the music of the church as a commitment to God.³⁰

Many of the individuals involved in the Boston Academy of Music and formation of music in the public schools were not so much musicians as they were “businessmen, civic leaders, or professional men, particularly clergymen and educators.”³¹ The purposes of the academy, according to Pemberton, were ongoing musical instruction, presentation of concerts, ongoing lectures on various topics related to music in churches, and advocacy for music being taught in schools.³² William Woodbridge, the corresponding secretary of the Academy, was the editor of an important publication called the *American Annals of Education*, and as such, was able to bring national attention to the activities at the Academy.³³ With the success of the Boston Academy of Music and music being taught in the public schools in Boston, interest in forming music education in the public schools began to spread to other places, such as “Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Ohio, Maryland, New York and Connecticut.”³⁴

Almost two decades after Pemberton’s major writings on the beginning of music education, David M. Miller wrote a dissertation titled *The Beginnings of Music in the Boston Schools: Decisions of the Boston School Committee in 1837 and 1845 in Light of Religious and Moral Concerns of the Time*. Miller shifts the bulk of his focus to individuals involved in public school music other than Mason. The impression the reader might conclude from Miller’s dissertation (as opposed to Pemberton’s) regarding the lead

³⁰ Ibid., 108–111.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 176.

³³ Ibid., 179.

³⁴ Pemberton, *His Life and Work*, 78.

up to the introduction of music in the schools in Boston is that William Woodridge was a significantly more influential advocate than Mason. Miller also mentions the work of George Snelling who gave a report bearing his own name to the school committee in 1831 and obtained approval for vocal music in the schools in 1832, although it was not implemented at that time.³⁵

Miller discusses a shift in 1841 away from talking about the religious effects of music to that of moral effects.³⁶ Although this shift, (supported by Samuel Eliot) was attracting attention, as Miller points out, the issue of morality as an effect of music had both a positive and negative view and some took that to the extreme.³⁷ As Miller describes, the problem was not necessarily an issue with religious music, but the concern was sectarian religion being taught.³⁸ Other research beyond Miller's more fully explains how the committee disbanded and then a new committee was formed in 1859 as discussed previously. This new committee was led by Luther Mason.³⁹ Luther was not only successful in his teaching, but also was sought out as a mentor for others seeking to teach music in the public schools. National meetings began to form, culminating in the establishment of the Music Teachers National Association in 1876.⁴⁰

In her 1992 article, "Music Teaching in the Boston Public Schools, 1864–1879," author Sondra Wieland Howe picks up where Miller ends the discussion. Luther Mason, who was hired in 1864 to lead music education in Boston after the committee came back together, established the use of a curriculum for school teachers, under the guidance of a

³⁵ Miller, "The Beginnings," 2.

³⁶ Ibid., 165.

³⁷ Miller, "The Beginnings," 167.

³⁸ Ibid., 180.

³⁹ Howe, "Music Teaching," 324.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

music specialist, to teach music to the children appropriate to their grade level.⁴¹ By 1869, Luther Mason was nationally known and spoke at meetings of the National Musical Congress. By 1876, he spoke at the first meeting of the Music Teachers' National Association.⁴²

2.4 THE HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR MOVEMENT

As the meetings of the Music Teachers' National Association progressed into the twentieth century, they became a venue for academic choirs to demonstrate their performance ability. *A cappella* choirs developed as a trend in high-school music. A 1931 article by writer William Fisher describes the contributing events that brought this movement about:

As a result of the three events, Chicago, 1928 and 1930 and Detroit, 1931, choral music has found and will forever hold its rightful place in the plan of the music culture and education in our country. The new dispensation has gripped the interest of every wide-awake musician.⁴³

What Fisher was referring to regarding the Chicago meeting was a demonstration of *a cappella* singing by the Flint Central High School Choir at the 1928 meeting. Music had been introduced in high schools in the mid nineteenth century, but there had been little consistency on what was taught. Author Richard Kegerreis categorized choral music in high schools into three main camps: some high schools placed all their students into music classes, some had a large number of the student population in large oratorio choirs and some had extra-curricular groups, like glee clubs.⁴⁴ The Nicholas Senn High School Choir of Chicago also performed at the 1928 meeting. Kegerreis describes other groups

⁴¹ Howe, "Music Teaching," 317.

⁴² Ibid., 326.

⁴³ William Arms Fisher, "Vocal Music Has Come Into Its Own," *Music Supervisor's Journal* 18, no. 1 (October 1931): 49, www.jstor.org/stable/3383618.

⁴⁴ Richard I. Kegerreis, "History of the High School a Cappella Choir," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 18, no. 4 (Winter 1970): 319-29, www.jstor.org/stable/3344499.

that went on to perform at subsequent meetings, such as the Glenville High School Choral Club of Cleveland, Omaha Central High School *A Capella* Choir, Cleveland Heights High School and others.⁴⁵ These groups became a model for other high school choruses around the country. Kegerreis notes that many schools with *a cappella* choirs eventually began singing accompanied music, so the term “*a cappella*” started having a more general meaning of a select or auditioned group.⁴⁶

Fisher describes a new hierarchy within high school music programs, in which there were glee clubs for both boys and girls. The two glee clubs would collaborate to form a mixed ensemble and then a smaller, auditioned *a cappella* choir would be selected from that larger group.⁴⁷ The structure that Fisher described in his article still exists in some areas.

⁴⁵ Kegerreis, “History of the High School,” 325.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 329.

⁴⁷ Fisher, “Vocal Music,” 49.

CHAPTER 3

CHORAL SOCIETIES, COLLEGIATE SINGING, AND CHURCH CHOIRS

The hundred-year history of music in public schools certainly had an effect on the social climate in the mid-1960s for starting a choir festival. Graduates of high school choral programs looked for singing opportunities beyond their school years. Collegiate choirs, community choruses, and church choirs were beneficiaries of that interest. The history of college singing groups follows a similar trajectory as the advancement of public high school choruses. In some cases, collegiate singing groups began for the purpose of informal singing but eventually incorporated standard choral repertoire. Choral societies formed throughout the United States as they had previously in England and in Europe. Glee clubs found their way into the United States in both communities and on college campuses. Choir festivals assembled, some for the purpose of forming large choirs to sing major works, some as a setting for choruses to sing for each other, and some were competitive or graded, with comments from adjudicators being utilized to help their groups improve the quality of their singing. Many of these festivals are still in existence in one form or another.

3.1 CHORAL FESTIVALS

The idea of multiple church choirs combining for musical events extends back historically for at least three hundred years. Perhaps the most well-known church choir festival is the Three Choirs Festival. This festival, which celebrated its 300th anniversary

in 2015, combines the choirs of three English cathedrals in Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester. The festival's website claims that it is "the oldest non-competitive classical music festival in the world."⁴⁸ In the United States, as apparently in England, choral festivals have come to have varying meaning.

It is interesting that the Three Choirs Festival makes the distinction that it is non-competitive, as so many music festivals, particularly those in the United States today, exist for the purpose of ensemble adjudication or competition. Numerous journal articles are available on almost every aspect of these festivals including the criteria of the adjudication, the need for changes to the festivals, to even the adjudication forms that are used.

The Three Choirs Festival differs from the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival as it is a gathering made up of choirs from three cathedrals in England all of the same denomination. The church choirs that form the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival are generally from small churches of many denominations, having less resources than a cathedral church would have. Still, the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival shows a continuation of a tradition that has roots for three hundred years.

3.2 CHORAL SOCIETIES

Choral societies in the United States began similarly to those established previously in England and German-speaking countries. The societies had formed as community organizations for sociable singing of major choral works. In England, two important such groups formed early on: The Birmingham Oratorio Choral Society and the Norwich Choral Society. Both of these organizations influenced choral societies in other areas. Ad hoc choral groups will sometimes form for the purpose of doing one

⁴⁸ "About Us," Three Choirs Festival, accessed March 14, 2017, <http://www.3choirs.org/about-us/>.

performance or a group of performances. With the choral societies having formed as organizations of their own, this was not necessary. As writer Howard Smithers writes, perhaps the most important aspect of the choral society, such as the one in Birmingham, could have been the efficiency of its organizational structure.

Originating after the Birmingham Festival of 1805, the Oratorio Choral Society was founded primarily to provide skilled and rehearsed singers for the triennial festivals in Birmingham. Between festivals, the society appeared in various performances, including special services in churches and chapels. The economic and musical advantages to festival organizers of a local chorus with a stable membership and continually in rehearsal, as opposed to singers who had never worked together being assembled for a festival, became obvious elsewhere.⁴⁹

Ten years after the founding of the Birmingham Oratorio Choral Society, the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston,⁵⁰ an organization still in existence in the twenty-first century, formed.⁵¹ By the mid-1830s, such a structure of choral festivals and societies were in place that, as Dennis Shrock describes in detail, when Mendelssohn composed his oratorio *Paulus* (St. Paul), the oratorio was ready for performance in multiple cities, in two languages.

The oratorio was composed in German, but, like the works of Haydn, it was immediately translated into English. The premiere (in German) at the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf in May 1836, with a chorus of 356 and an orchestra of 172, was immediately followed by performances (in English) in Liverpool in October 1836, Boston in May 1837, and London and Birmingham during the summer of 1837.⁵²

⁴⁹ Howard E. Smithers, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 276.

⁵⁰ See chapter two for more history of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston and its influence on music in the public schools of Boston.

⁵¹ Ezra Schabas, H. Earle Johnson, and Richard Crawford, "Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston," *American Music* 2, no. 2 (1984): 86–88, doi:10.2307/3051661.

⁵² Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 451.

Through festivals and choral societies, rehearsals and performances were not just seen as a musical endeavor, but also a social event for the performers as well as members of the community who attended the concerts.

3.2 GLEE CLUBS

Perhaps there is no phenomenon in choral music dating back to the nineteenth century that had a more important influence on the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival's establishment than that of the Glee Club, specifically those at Harvard University and Yale University. As will be more fully discussed in chapter 5, the Rev. James L. Pratt, founder of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, was a singer and manager of the Harvard Glee Club in his undergraduate years at Harvard University in the 1950s.⁵³

Glee Clubs and Catch Clubs were present in England as early as the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Both of these traditions were based on the singing of catches and glees, a type of part songs which were composed mostly for four-part *a cappella* male singing at first, and later were written for mixed chorus. The Noblemen's and Gentlemen's Catch Club of London was founded in 1761⁵⁵ and provided many commissions to composers of the day for Catches and Glees.⁵⁶ Glee Clubs such as the Mendelssohn Glee Club in New York, founded in 1866⁵⁷ began appearing in the nineteenth century, some of them on the campuses of colleges and universities.

⁵³ The Rev. James L. Pratt, interviewed by Mark D. Merritt, June 25, 2017.

⁵⁴ David Johnson, "The 18th-Century Glee," *The Musical Times* 120, no. 1633 (March 1979): 200, doi:10.2307/961753.

⁵⁵ Brian Robins, "The Catch Club in 18th-Century England," *Early Music* 28, no. 4 (November 2000): 517.

⁵⁶ Johnson, "The 18th-Century Glee," 201.

⁵⁷ William Osborne, *American Singing Societies and Their Partsongs* (Lawton, OK: American Choral Directors Association, 1994), 18.

The oldest collegiate glee club is the Harvard Glee Club, founded in 1858. While in its early years, the club “served principally as a social club on campus, performing college songs and glees to the accompaniment of banjos and mandolins.”⁵⁸ Under the leadership of Archibald T. Davison, who started coaching the group in 1912, the Harvard Glee club began the transformation into a serious performance ensemble. By 1921, the group had toured in Europe and in the mid-1950s, (around the time when Rev. Pratt would have been singing with and managing the Harvard Glee Club) a major recording was released.⁵⁹ Founded in 1861, the Yale Glee Club has a similar story line to that of the Harvard Glee Club. The first prominent director of the group, Marshall Bartholomew, was a composer and, through a series of music for men’s chorus, added significantly to the available repertoire for male choruses. Bartholomew’s successor, Fenno Heath, who began conducting the group in 1953, continued to advance the group in many ways, as it became more focused on performing the works of serious, contemporary composers.⁶⁰

Two important resources about collegiate glee clubs in the United States are *The Development of Male Glee Clubs in American Colleges and Universities* by Arnold Ray Thomas 1(962), and *The Development of Collegiate Male Glee Clubs in America: An Historical Overview* by Jeremy D. Jones (2010). Thomas researches the history of glee clubs, their foreign roots, their growth and decline through his present day, 1962. Thomas interviewed retired glee club directors Archibald T. Davidson of Harvard University and Marshall Bartholomew of Yale University as part of his research.⁶¹ Thomas’s document

⁵⁸ [Anon.], “Harvard Glee Club,” *Choral Journal*, November 1990, 58.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “Yale Glee Club,” 81.

⁶¹ Arnold Ray Thomas, “The Development of Male Glee Clubs in American Colleges and Universities” (Ed.D. diss., Columbia University, 1962), 1–7, accessed November 1, 2017, <https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/docview/302090972?accountid=13965>.

is particularly beneficial in evaluating the impact of the collegiate glee club movement on singing in the United States just a few years prior the start of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival.

Thomas chronicles the history of the early settlers in colonial America, which he describes as “a musical wilderness in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.”⁶² Aside from the religious reasons given in chapter two of this document, Thomas provides additional reasons for the lack of a male musical culture in early colonial America as opposed to Europe:

There was no royal patronage for music; there were no churches eager to employ a Bach and no cities or towns of any size which had an interest in promoting vocal or instrumental music. Pioneer conditions were not conducive to musical expression in this rugged wilderness; men were so busy providing food and protection for their families that music making was left to the women of the family.⁶³

The comprehensive history of the Harvard Glee Club up to the early 1960s provides a treasure trove of information on how this singing organization transformed from a student-led activity to a serious musical ensemble performing major choral works. The first important point of transition, missed by many authors, is the appointment of Charles Eliot (Samuel Eliot’s grandson) as president of Harvard in 1869. According to Thomas, it was under his leadership that music became an academic subject at Harvard with John Knowles Paine as the first professor. After retirement, Paine was then replaced by Andrew Locke in 1882 who served a long tenure in the position, which included an advisory role with the Harvard Glee Club.⁶⁴ Thomas explains the club’s history of singing with banjos and mandolins as being part of a merger that took place in 1887

⁶² Thomas, “Development of Male Glee Clubs,” 30.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 49–50.

between three musical clubs on campus: the Glee Club, Mandolin Club, and Banjo Club.⁶⁵

The second major point of transition for the Harvard Glee Club came with the appointment of Archibald T. Davison, who Thomas describes as “the first to make the male glee club a respectable musical organization.”⁶⁶ Davison worked with the group on a volunteer basis and, as Thomas accounts, used his volunteer status to his advantage to bring about a three-fold agenda:

First, he wanted to improve the tone quality of the group and to develop some semblance of vocal control so that the men could do justice to a more demanding repertoire. Secondly he wanted to dispense somehow with the typical glee club pep songs and bring about interest in a better quality of music. Finally, realizing that the great works of choral music were written for mixed voices, and that everyone should experience the thrill of singing such music, he wanted the men to sing occasionally with the women's chorus of Radcliffe College.⁶⁷

Thomas accounts how Davison grew the size of the group and improved their sound through involving himself in the auditioning process and by working with members of the glee club who also sang in the chapel choir that Davison directed. He expanded the repertoire to include the music of European composers such as Mendelssohn and produced many arrangements of his own. Davison continued over several years to gain more influence over the group and brought higher standards in the repertoire the group performed, sometimes facing a backlash for it, but culminating in a collaborated effort with the Radcliffe Choral Society, the first of many concerts with the Boston Symphony in 1917.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid., 50.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 52–53

⁶⁸ Ibid., 56.

In much the same manner as the history of the Harvard Glee Club, the Yale Glee Club evolved out of a long history of informal singing at Yale, dating back to 1812, according to Thomas. Yale Glee Club also had a period of time similar to Harvard Glee Club, in which instrumental clubs playing banjos were part of the concerts. Like the Harvard Glee club, a particular director, Marshall Bartholomew, was integral in bringing about a higher standard of quality to the Yale Glee Club's performance as well as increasing the size of the ensemble.⁶⁹ It was Bartholomew's successor, Fenno Heath, who had more of a pivotal role with the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, having conducted one of the early concerts three years prior to the founding of the festival, in which the Noank and Mystic area church choirs combined to sing Handel's *Messiah*. Thomas describes Heath as, "a former Yale Glee Club Singer and member of the Whiffenpoofs. Under his direction, the Glee Club continues to maintain the high performing standards and traditions which Marshall Bartholomew established."⁷⁰

Jeremy Jones provides an update to the existing research done by Thomas and others. Jones provides fresh information based on the modern standards of the twenty-first century. Jones clarifies that the term "glee club," in his research, has a more broad meaning to include various types of collegiate all-male choruses.⁷¹

Jones traces the background history of the Catch and Glee in much the same manner as Thomas, along with the history of the German *Männerchor* movement.⁷² One particular point that Jones makes is that at both University of Michigan and at Yale

⁶⁹ Ibid., 59–63.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁷¹ Jeremy D. Jones, "The Development of Collegiate Male Glee Clubs in America: An Historical Overview" (DMA diss., University of Cincinnati, 2010), 1, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/docview/763426280?accountid=13965>.

⁷² Jones, "Development of Collegiate," 9.

University, the founding of the glee clubs came many years before either university officially had a music school.⁷³

Jones provides a great deal of information on the touring and recording efforts of the Harvard Glee Club, noting since the initial performance with the Boston Symphony in 1917, an important “premier of Igor Stravinsky’s (1882-1971) neo-classical opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* in 1928 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, which they also later recorded under the baton of Leonard Bernstein.”⁷⁴

While Jones addresses the much-deserved contributions of Marshall Bartholomew to the success of the Yale Glee Club, he provides much more information on Bartholomew’s successor, Fenno Heath. About Heath, Jones writes:

Heath was a legendary conductor, composer, and arranger who continued to increase the worldwide prominence of the Glee Club through domestic and international tours. He continued the tradition that Bartholomew began by extensively arranging and composing new works published under the Yale Glee Club Series. Popular among Heath’s arrangements are *Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel?*, *Gaudeamus Igitur*, *He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands*, *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*, and *The Lamb*.⁷⁵

As the twentieth century continued, historic strides were made in choral singing at every level. Writer Leonard Van Camp points to Davison’s transformation of the Harvard Glee Club in 1919 as an important benchmark from which these improvements came:

Davison’s example was followed by others, and the standard of music performed by glee clubs gradually improved. Also in 1919, selections in the St. Olaf Choir Series were published by Augsburg Publishing House. By this time, students of St. Olaf’s conductor Christiansen and Northwestern’s conductor Lutkin had begun *a cappella* choirs similar to

⁷³ Ibid., 36.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁵ Jones, “Development of Collegiate,” 62–63.

those in which they had sung, and John Smallman began his pioneering efforts that raised choral music in California to an outstanding level.⁷⁶

Although in this document many of the facets of choral music in the United States (schools, colleges, community groups and churches) have been isolated and the history of each has been explored, it is important to understand that these developments were happening either simultaneously or within a short time span of each other.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH CHOIRS

The church choir in eighteenth-century New England was primarily a group of people who could sing that sat near the front of the church to help lead the singing of Psalms. In nineteenth-century Boston, Lowell Mason and others like him, who had been exposed to music during European travel, brought about a more refined approach to church music in a style that reflected that of the music in Europe. The singers and leaders sometimes were professionals, especially in larger, urban churches.⁷⁷ This trend continued, but was cut short in some areas by changes to the church and church music resulting from the revivalist movement. Musicologist Robert Stevenson, in characterizing the beliefs of Robert Hood, an early author on the subject of music in the United States, writes: For Hood “revival music” was contaminated by “vulgar and irreverent lightness.”⁷⁸

As church choirs moved closer to and eventually into the twentieth century, a large difference began to emerge between the church music in the urban areas of the country versus the less-populated rural areas. In the cities and to some extent the towns in

⁷⁶ Leonard Van Camp, “The Rise of American Choral Music and the A Capella ‘Bandwagon,’” *Music Educators Journal* 67, no. 3 (November 1980): 37.

⁷⁷ Robertson, “Early American Singing,” 17.

⁷⁸ Robert Stevenson, “American Musical Scholarship: Parker to Thayer,” *19th-Century Music* 1, no. 3 (March 1978): 196, doi:10.2307/746410.

the more populated areas, having a large church building with a pipe organ and professional singers (at least a quartet of one professional singer per part) was becoming a symbol of prosperous American middle-class life.

In the early 1920s, three major music conservatories formed in the United States: the Eastman School of Music, the Julliard School of Music and the Curtis Institute of Music. Choral music became an offering in America's high schools and Colleges on a much wider basis, fueled in part by the emergence of two iconic choral programs: Westminster Choir College, founded by John Finley Williamson⁷⁹ and the choral program at St. Olaf's College under the leadership of F. Melius Christiansen.⁸⁰

Large church choirs, made up of volunteers or with a mix of volunteers and professionals, became common. Some churches had professional choirs.⁸¹ Westminster Choir College and other programs in universities and seminaries began providing specialized training for music professionals seeking to lead church music programs with specialties in organ study, choral directing and working with graded children's choirs.

Professional organizations began to provide support to leaders of church music programs. The American Guild of Organists, founded in 1896, is still the primary organization geared toward supporting church music leaders in the United States.⁸² The American Choral Directors Association, founded in 1959,⁸³ though originally started for support to collegiate choral directors, also provides professional support to church

⁷⁹ David A. Wehr, "John Finley Williamson (1887-1964): His Life and Contribution to Choral Music" (PhD diss., University of Miami, 1971), 108, accessed April 15, 2017, ProQuest.

⁸⁰ Leonard Van Camp, "The Formation of a Cappella Choirs at Northwestern University, St. Olaf College, and Westminster Choir College," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1965): 227. doi: 10.2307/849576.

⁸¹ Noble Cain, *Choral Music and Its Practice* (New York: M. Witmark and Sons, 1942), 157.

⁸² [Anon.], "History," American Guild of Organists, accessed April 15, 2017, <https://www.agohq.org/about-the-ago/history-purpose/>.

⁸³ [Anon.], "ACDA History," American Choral Directors Association, accessed April 15, 2017, https://acda.org/page.asp?page=acda_history.

musicians. Children's choirs in churches, which had previously been limited to select choirs of boys, became a prominent movement in the mid-twentieth century. The Choristers Guild was formed in 1949 as a professional group and resource to those working with children's choirs in churches.⁸⁴ Each of these professional organizations offer regional and national conferences and provide scholarly journals for life-long education and benefit to their members.

The influence of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) and the Choristers Guild is substantiated in the fifty-year development of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. Many of the local music directors have memberships in these organizations. In addition, as will be discussed more fully in chapter 6, many of the prominent conductors of the festival have had important roles in these organizations, some at the national level. The Chorister's Guild is also an important publisher of sacred music for children's and youth choirs, with several titles in the festival library list. While the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) focused primarily on collegiate choral music in its early years, it has since dedicated a portion of its mission to church music. In the last decade, the ACDA has also aligned itself in partnership with other like-minded groups such as the AGO. All of these organizations foster the mission of church choral music and aid in influencing the ongoing mission of festivals such as the one in the Mystic area, either directly or indirectly through the participation in them by local festival leaders and guest conductors.

⁸⁴ Christine Bordeaux Farrior, "Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice: Helen Kemp and the Development of the Children's Choir Movement" (EdD diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1993), 1, accessed February 26, 2017, ProQuest.

CHAPTER 4

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT AND CHURCH MUSIC

4.1 THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

The Ecumenical movement promotes unity and cooperation among Churches of various faiths. Author Sarah Mitchell writes: “It is based on the biblical concept of *oikoumene*, usually translated as ‘the entire inhabited earth.’”⁸⁵ The concept is pretty simple. To those who ascribe to the idea of Ecumenism, there is one universal church, as described by the historic creeds. The aim is restore that universal church from a fractured church separated by numerous denominations. Instead, the focus of all Christians should be on carrying out the work of Christ.

Many authors point to the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 as the beginning of the modern Ecumenical movement. However, there were cooperative efforts among church bodies prior to this conference. The founding of organizations in the 19th century such as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) are examples. John Borelli, in a 2010 article commemorating one hundred years since the World Missions Conference, acknowledges some dialogue toward church unity in the late 19th century, but affirms that the modern ecumenical movement is primarily a 20th-century phenomenon.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Sarah Mitchell, “Together in Song: An Ecumenical Si(g)n?,” *The Ecumenical Review* 54, no. 3 (July 2002): 355.

⁸⁶ John Borelli, “The Origins and Early Development of Interreligious Relations during the Century of the Church (1910-2010),” *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Spring 2010): 81-105.

According to writer Jeffrey S. Kirch, the purpose of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference was to bring protestant missionaries together with the goal of ending “the scandal of a divided Church, which hampered the proclamation of the Gospel.”⁸⁷ Absent from the 1910 council were official participants from the Roman Catholic Church.

Although Kirch’s research in 2015 primarily focuses on the period since the 1960s, around the time of the Second Vatican Council, he provides a historical synopsis of divisions among Christians, dating back to biblical times, along with an account of some steps that the church has taken to try, often unsuccessfully, to remedy that. Kirch gives specific attention to the major division presented by the Protestant Reformation: “the effect of the 16th century Reformation, leading to the dramatic split of the Western Christian Church, is still recognizable in the 21st century.”⁸⁸ Kirch acknowledges the founding of the World Council of Churches in 1948 as another important step toward unity, characterizing the organization of 150 churches as not a “superchurch”⁸⁹ but a fellowship of churches.⁹⁰ The Roman Catholic Church had no official participation in 1948. The beginning of their involvement with the Ecumenical movement came at the Second Vatican Council under the leadership of Pope John XXIII. The Second Vatican Council is seen by many, including Kirch, as high point in the move toward unity. Kirch identifies several ways in which the Second Vatican Council showed the Roman Catholic Church’s commitment to unity: the invitation of observers who were not Roman Catholic, dialogue between the bishops and those observers, and the establishment of a “Secretariat

⁸⁷ Jeffrey S. Kirch, “Beyond Dialogue: Avenues toward Christian Unity” (PhD diss., Loyola University Chicago, 2015), 2, <https://login.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/docview/1708673263?accountid=13965>. (Accessed February 2, 2018).

⁸⁸ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

for Christian Unity”⁹¹ for the promotion of unity between the Roman Catholic Church with orthodox churches and with Western protestant churches.

4.2 MUSIC AND ECUMENISM

Before the modern Ecumenical movement, music in worship has had an ecumenical characteristic for centuries. One only needs to look through a hymnal index of modern denominational hymnals to find examples of hymns translated from original Latin texts that come from the Roman Catholic tradition, hymns translated from German texts, which come from the tradition of the Lutheran chorales, metrical Psalms and tunes from other reformed traditions, and hymns of Methodist origin, such as those written by Charles Wesley. Although there may be large disagreements in theology, the shared collection of hymnody is one avenue in which worship in churches is already united. “Music is also an ecumenical bridge...” writes modern author Patrick Henry.”⁹² Henry continues:

--and served as such long before there was an ecumenical movement. Catholics were singing the works of Bach, a Lutheran, and Lutherans the works of Mozart, a Catholic, when Lutherans and Catholics were, on dogmatic grounds, consigning one another to Hell.⁹³

Much progress has been made in several centuries. Since the modern Ecumenical movement, the kind of “dogmatic grounds” of the past Henry refers to has hopefully led to a more cooperative understanding of each other’s traditions.

Certainly great joy can come from churches of various faiths joining together to sing together from this wide variety of hymnody. Henry suggests a deeper reason for doing this. “Fun would be enough, but it isn't all there is. A Christian unity hymnfest

⁹¹ Ibid., 22.

⁹² Patrick Henry, “Singing in Faith Together,” *Christian Century: An Ecumenical Weekly* 114, no. 17 (May 1997): 500.

⁹³ Ibid.

reminds us that music is the language of God; poetry is language about God; and hymns are the stories of God's household.”⁹⁴ The collection of hymns we sing are now a part of a shared tradition, not Catholic hymns, Lutheran hymns, or Methodist hymns.

4.3 THE MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

By the mid-1960s, aided by world-wide and national organizations, local groups of church leaders were forming organizations to participate in cooperative efforts. Two such groups existed in the area around Mystic, Connecticut in the mid-1960s. One was a group of clergy called the Mystic Area Ministers' Association, and the other was a non-clergy group called the Mystic Interfaith Laymen's Council. These two like-minded groups merged in 1971 to form the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. The council was formed “as a means of communication and cooperation among the many churches located in Mystic.”⁹⁵ The council has an organization structure of a president (which rotates between clergy and lay leadership), vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Each participating congregation is represented by one member of the clergy and one to two lay persons.⁹⁶

Since 1972, the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival is sponsored each year and funded with the help of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. The council provides an organizational structure that brings member churches together for many shared events in the community. The council provides an avenue for fund-raising through participating churches to pay for the new music used each year in the festival, as well as funds to provide honorariums for guest conductors, brass players and other accompanying

⁹⁴ Ibid., 501.

⁹⁵ “Mystic Area Ecumenical Council,” <https://maecmystic.wordpress.com/> (accessed January 26, 2018).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

musicians, and fees for commissioned works. The council provides clergy leadership for the festival service and a continuity of church musicians who plan the annual festival. Member churches provide the venues for the festival rehearsals, workshops and services. Most importantly, the member churches provide the singers that perform in the large festival chorus each year.

CHAPTER 5

LEADERS OF THE MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

5.1 FOUNDER

The Rev. James L. Pratt arrived as minister at Noank Baptist Church in 1963. Pratt was a recent graduate of Harvard University and Yale Divinity School. During his undergraduate years, he had sung with and managed the Harvard Glee Club during the directorship of G. Wallace Woodworth. Pratt's management with the Glee Club provided him excellent leadership training, especially for planning musical events:

One of my favorite memories as manager of the Glee Club is that he (Woodworth) bumped you right up from a freshman manager, to assistant manager, to associate manager, to manager. During the last half of your senior year, you were spring trip manager. So it was my turn to be spring trip manager. The Harvard Spring vacation, which was when all this happened, happened to fall on Holy Week. So that wasn't really difficult. I did the first "ecclesiastical spring trip." We sang on Palm Sunday in a big Episcopal church in Pittsburgh and filled the place up. Then we were at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg on Maundy Thursday, we were at the National Cathedral on Good Friday, and we were at St. John the Divine on Easter.⁹⁷

Pratt's management with the Harvard Glee Club coincided with one of busiest points in the group's history of live performances with the Boston Symphony:

I was there since 1955. We sang, I count, at least 50 times with the Boston Symphony (during four years at Harvard). Not only in Boston but in Carnegie Hall, in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and at Tanglewood, we sang before the year that I had moved. I was manager, but my predecessor did the first transcontinental tour and we sang clear across the United States in the early summer, and then they turned to Tanglewood to sing

⁹⁷ James Pratt interview.

with the Boston Symphony there. And this was a really marvelous experience.⁹⁸

Although there were a team of clergy and lay leaders involved in planning coordinated singing events among area churches for several years, Pratt is considered the founder the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, in 1968. As a minister, Pratt has had a great interest in cooperative work with churches of all faiths. Through his activity with the Mystic Area Ministers Association, which later merged with another group to form the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council, Pratt was able to achieve his goals of cooperative work between churches and bringing churches together to sing.

I was somewhat instrumental in getting the Mystic Area churches to organize something like the Mystical Area Ecumenical Council, and they gave me a forum from the Mystic Area Minister's Association (MAMA). They had a very short life span, followed by something called the Mystic Interfaith Layman's Council. And again, I had a role in this. I'm not sure if I was primary or just instrumental in getting these things going. Then this group began to show that it was not only responsible for joint services like Thanksgiving and times like that, but the music from then on.⁹⁹

From 1963 to 2000, Rev. Pratt was "Minister of the Parish" at the Noank Baptist Church, Pratt often said that he preferred that to the title of "pastor," because he did not care much for the idea of referring to his church members as "sheep."¹⁰⁰ Pratt utilized a unique skill set for a senior minister. As a gifted pianist and collegiate-trained singer, Pratt was also the director of the children's choir for the majority of his ministry in Noank. Two of the ways that Pratt recruited children into this choir were annual participation in the choir festival and periodic, personally chaperoned sight-seeing trips to Boston and New York. Putting together a children's choir festival at the time was a

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

daunting task. As Pratt recalls, the make-up of the choirs in the local churches were different from each other.

There was something every year at least one thing, and as I think you observed, the Junior Choir Festival was the first anguish, and this is because most churches did not have a junior choir and a youth choir. They are all together, which is the way it was here at Noank. Other places enjoyed dividing and having a junior choir and a youth choir. So something like fourth through sixth grade was Junior Choir, and junior high and high school was youth choir. And for a while they were all together and I was the conductor of the so-called Junior Choir, and we had upwards of 45 kids.¹⁰¹

The large junior choir from Noank Baptist often accounted for one-third to one-half of the youth participants in the early festivals.

Pratt served as the General Chairperson of events for the festival from its beginning until 1993. In this role, Rev. Pratt and his wife Nancy, often provided lodging for the guest conductors in their home at the Noank Baptist Church parsonage. Since many of the conductors were invited back multiple times, life-long friendships were formed with them. In 2000, the year Pratt retired from Noank Baptist Church, the festival was dedicated to him.

5.2 OTHER CLERGY LEADERS

Pratt had some help from other members of the clergy in the area who had musical interests. Prior to the combined choir events, the area churches met from time to time for hymn singing occasions, led by the minister of the Union Baptist Church in Mystic, Dr. Elbert Gates. Gates also had a connection to the Noank Baptist Church. His father, Dr. Elbert Gates, Sr. was the minister of Noank Baptist Church several years earlier. The senior Dr. Gates married a woman from Noank, Grace Morgan. “Pearly” (as Pratt referred to the younger Rev. Gates) was their son. Pratt recalled the local hymn

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

services and those that Rev. Gates led at the national meetings of the American Baptist Convention, saying that Gates was famous for leading the hymn sings. He had been a missionary/teacher in Hong Kong for over 15 years prior to his appointment as minister of the Union Baptist Church. When Rev. Gates arrived back in the area, “he was welcomed back with open arms: ‘we’ve got our song leader back!’”¹⁰²

Before Pratt’s involvement with the Mystic Area Minister’s Association, there had been a couple of attempts at bringing the church choirs together. One had been a performance of Handel’s *Messiah*, and the other a Lenten performance of Stainer’s *Crucifixion*. Pratt found out about these previous performances from Gates. Because of their common interests in Noank, the church, and music, they talked quite a bit. In 1965, Gates had done some research on these previous performances and had inspired Pratt to help get the churches together to do some concerts of *Messiah* and other works in an organized way. The result of these conversations were several performances of major choral works by the combined adult choirs of local churches, beginning in 1965.

Another minister with musical interests arrived in the Mystic area in 1972, a year after the formation of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. The Rev. Newell E. Bishop was minister of the North Stonington Congregational Church from 1972–99, a church that was already over 250 years old.¹⁰³ Rev. Bishop began his ministry in North Stonington after eleven years as minister of a church in New Hampshire.

In Rev. Bishop, the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival immediately had a new friend, supporter, and leader. For Rev. Pratt, Bishop’s arrival in the mystic area renewed a long-time friendship, the two had attended Yale Divinity School together and

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ “History of the Church,” Congregational Church of North Stonington, http://www.congregationalchurchofnorthstonington.org/index_files/church_history.htm (accessed February 1, 2018).

had sung in the Yale Chapel Choir. As a minister, Rev. Bishop had a great interest in church music. He was very active as a musician, having sung in the College Choir and Glee Club at Williams College, in addition to the Yale Divinity School Choir. Rev. Bishop was the youth choir director at the church during his 25 years as minister in North Stonington. He was very active in planning and participating in the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival and led many church music conferences for United Church denomination.¹⁰⁴ The 1999 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival was dedicated to Bishop upon his retirement from the ministry.

The Rev. Walter Edmonds was a student at Yale Divinity School in the 1960s when he was youth minister at the Union Baptist Church. Edmonds is an ordained United Methodist elder. Edmonds' undergraduate degree was in Music, and during his time at Yale Divinity School, Edmonds also taught at the music conservatory in Hartford.¹⁰⁵ Edmonds is an organist and has always had a dual career as both pastor and church musician. Six years after finishing his Master of Divinity at Yale, Rev. Edmonds earned a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from Temple University. In the early history of combined Mystic area adult choir performances, Edmonds conducted a combined performance of Stainer's *Crucifixion*. During his time as a Methodist minister, Rev. Edmonds was granted a leave to work as minister of music at St. Luke Lutheran Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he established a School of Sacred Music.¹⁰⁶ Rev. Edmonds conducted the 2011 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, held at Union Baptist Church.

¹⁰⁴ "Rev. Newell E. Bishop Obituary," *Westerly Sun*, September 9, 2009, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/thewesterlysun/obituary.aspx?n=newell-e-bishop&pid=132543577> (accessed February 1, 2018).

¹⁰⁵ Information from the program for the 2011 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

The Rev. Linda Lozis is a gifted organist and choir director. She trained as a musician in her undergraduate studies and received a Master of Church Music from the School of Church Music at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. As an ordained Baptist minister, Rev. Lozis served several churches (including Union Baptist Church in Mystic) as an associate minister, sometimes combining those duties with leading the music. In 2001, she became the music director at Noank Baptist Church. Rev. Lozis was active on the leadership and planning committee of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival until her retirement in 2014. During her years as music director in Noank, Lozis also directed several combined Mystic area adult choir presentations of Handel's *Messiah*, held annually at Noank Baptist Church.

5.3 LAY LEADERS

Jane Schmidt became the General Chairperson of the festival in 1994 after Rev. Pratt stepped down. Jane was a teacher at Noank Elementary School and was a gifted pianist and musician. Schmidt worked with Pratt for many years in planning the festivals. Although she chose to be a classroom teacher, Schmidt's undergraduate degree was in public school music.¹⁰⁷ Schmidt was the director of the children's choir at Noank Baptist Church from 2000–09. During Schmidt's leadership of the festival, Michael G. Noonan, director of music at North Stonington Congregational Church, and the Rev. Linda Lozis worked closely with her. The 2009 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival was dedicated to Schmidt. Schmidt was near the end stages of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis ("Lou Gehrig's Disease") at the time.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ "Jane Schmidt Obituary," *The Day*, 8/7/2009.

¹⁰⁸ Michael Noonan, interviewed by Mark D. Merritt, Mystic, CT, June 26, 2017.

Michael G. Noonan and Robin Crandall currently lead the planning team for the festival. Noonan grew up singing in the festival as a member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Mystic and was an organ student of Roberta Bitgood, an important leader of the festival. Noonan reflected on his time as Bitgood's student.

She first retired quote-unquote "retired" from Battle Creek, MI. That was her last big church job. She came back to this area and came to St. Mark's. I took organ lessons from her at age 15. I started playing in church at age 16, 15–16. She was president of the American Guild of Organists (AGO) at that time, so she was out of town a lot, and I got to play at St. Mark's.¹⁰⁹

Noonan is a full-time music educator in North Stonington, where he currently conducts the elementary school choir program. For several years, Noonan was the band director for all of the North Stonington Schools. Noonan worked with Rev. Newell Bishop for many years at his church position as music director of the North Stonington Congregational Church.¹¹⁰

Robin Crandall is music director of the Union Baptist Church in Mystic. She holds a Bachelor's and a Master's in Music in Vocal Performance from Converse College. Crandall later pursued a teaching certificate for Connecticut Public Schools and is retired as a music educator with the Groton Public Schools.¹¹¹

The current planning committee includes fifteen people from eleven area churches. George Mancini and Diane Mosier, from Church of the Immaculate Conception, Westerly Rhode Island, Andrew Wallace from Dunn's Corner's Community Church, Presbyterian, Westerly Rhode Island, Andrew Howell, Mystic Congregational Church, Rick and Erin Wyman, Noank Baptist Church, Michael Noonan, North Stoning Congregational church, Betty Land, Poquonnock Bridge Baptist Church, Groton, Robin

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ "Staff," Union Baptist Church, <https://www.ubcmystic.org/7> (accessed February 1, 2018).

Martelle and Jane Nolan, St. David's Episcopal Church, Gales Ferry, David Tubbs, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Mystic, Cindy Hopkins and Jane Richards, St. Mary Mother of the Redeemer Church, Groton, Robin Crandall, Union Baptist Church, and Dara and Barbara Blackstone from United Church of Stonington.¹¹² According to Noonan, the festival planning is almost year round. The team takes a break for a few weeks after the festival that is normally held in March or April, then they are right back to work in August planning the next one.¹¹³

¹¹² Information from the program for the 2017 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival.

¹¹³ Michael Noonan Interview.

CHAPTER 6

HISTORY OF THE MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

In 1965, five adult choirs from churches in the coastal villages of Noank and Mystic, Connecticut gathered together to sing. These churches have been banding together to sing in one form or another ever since and many other churches have joined them. In recent years, even churches from outside the Mystic area, which are not part of the Mystic Ecumenical Council, have participated. Michael Noonan mentioned the two churches from Westerly, Rhode Island, that have participated in the festival for several years. Noonan said that they make it a regular practice to invite churches that are from neighboring communities within the region to participate in the festival.¹¹⁴

The history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival can be divided into five periods: (a) combined area church hymn singing services prior to 1965 (discussed previously in 5.2), (b) collaborative concerts of major choral works performed by choir members from area churches beginning in 1965 (6.1), (c) a Children's Choir Festival, starting in 1968, which is considered the beginning of the festival (6.2), (d) a multi-generational choir festival beginning in 1972 until present (6.4), (e) guest conductors with a national reputation beginning in 1978, (6.5).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Michael Noonan Interview.

¹¹⁵ A brief history of collaborative music events among the churches in the Mystic area, provided in the 2017 festival service program, can be found in Appendix B.

6.1 COMBINED ADULT CHOIR CONCERTS

For the first cooperative performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1965, Rev. Pratt suggested that Fenno Heath, conductor of the Yale Glee Club, be the guest conductor. Pratt knew Heath from his Harvard Glee Club days. During the rivalry sporting weekends, the Harvard and Yale Glee Clubs would hold singing events together.

When it was decided that we would do a real concert of Handel's *Messiah*, I decided that I would recommend Fenno Heath, whom I got to know, not too personally, but indirectly. I was manager of the Harvard Glee Club and we used to sing joint concerts together to show our connections at the Yale-Harvard football games. So he's the director of the Glee Club over there. Inadvertently, I got to know his skills to get sound (from a choral group) over loud stadium noise.¹¹⁶

In 1966, the combined choirs joined forces during Lent to perform *Ein deutsches Requiem*, by Johannes Brahms, under the direction of James Armstrong.

During the next year, at my suggestion, the Mystic Area churches, which were not yet organized into something called the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council, but they were heading in that direction, they sang for Jim Armstrong, who was at my college and I knew him very well.¹¹⁷

Armstrong had been the assistant director and accompanist of the Harvard Glee Club when Pratt was a in it and managed it. By 1966, Armstrong was on the music faculty of Connecticut College, in New London, Connecticut.¹¹⁸ The combined choirs sang part one of Handel's *Messiah* in December of 1967 and parts two and three in the spring of 1968. Both performances were directed by local directors, Margaret Brooks and Donald Janse. After the spring performance, the churches decided that it might be nice for the children's choirs to have a joint singing event the following December.

¹¹⁶ James Pratt interview.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

6.2 CHILDREN'S CHOIR FESTIVALS

The first of the Children's Choir Festivals was held at the Union Baptist Church in Mystic on December 8, 1968. According to an article in the New London newspaper, there were a hundred singers in the children's choir representing five area churches: Mystic Congregational Church, First United Methodist, Noank Baptist, St. Mark's Episcopal, and the Union Baptist Church.¹¹⁹ A sixth church, St. Patrick's, was also involved. The article mentions that Mystic Area Ministers Association sponsored the concert, its president, Rev. James Carini of St. Patrick's Church, gave the benediction, and that the children's concert was in lieu of the adults performing Handel's *Messiah* as they had done in previous years.¹²⁰ In 1969, the combined adult choirs performed Faure's *Requiem* during Lent, conducted by Barbara Kane, Director of Music at the Union Baptist Church. Another children's choir concert took place in December of that year. In 1970 and 1971, records do not indicate that there was a children's choir festival. Rather, this was a transitional period in which the two Ecumenical groups in Mystic were merging to become the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. There were joint adult choir presentations of Stainer's *Crucifixion* (conducted by Walter Edmunds in 1970 (as mentioned in chapter 5) and Dubois's *Seven Last Words*, conducted by Barbara Kane in 1971.

After the formation of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council in 1971, there was a support organization in place once again from which festivals could be planned and carried out. The 1972 festival was directed by Robert Newton, Director of Cadet Vocal Music at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, where

¹¹⁹ "Children's Choir Sings at Church," *The Day*, December 9, 1968.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Newton conducts the Glee Club and the select group, The USCGA Idlers.¹²¹ The academy offers both vocal and instrumental groups as extracurricular activities and public relations.

6.3 MULTI-GENERATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL, DIRECTORS, AND MUSIC

By 1973, the focus shifted from a children's choir festival to one that included children and adults. Rev. Pratt spoke about the decision to make the festival multi-generational, how it helped to assure a continuity of the festival and build the audience from the wider community:

I was seeing the continuity in having adults, children and youth sing during the year. Then the place is crowded. At some of the concerts, we had more than 400 people there, which would mean the Spicer Chapel was full in addition to the sanctuary at our church (Noank Baptist). We don't have a really big sanctuary, seeing that Union Baptist is probably the biggest, but it's always a very pleasant experience to see people outside the doors wanting to come in.¹²²

Since 1973, programming music for the youth and adult choirs to sing separately, as well as music that is performed by all the singing participants, has often been a component. According to Michael Noonan, there were still festivals that involved just the children and youth choirs on a rotating basis for a number of years. It depended on the directors, their respective areas of specialty and whether combined adult choirs had a separate concert planned. When the festival became multi-generational, there were only three churches that had seating capacity for the large audience and space for the large choir: Noank Baptist Church, Union Baptist Church and St. Mary's Catholic Church. Having a children's choir festival occasionally allowed for churches with a smaller

¹²¹ "Idlers," United States Coast Guard Academy, <http://www.cga.edu/cadet2.aspx?id=467> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹²² James Pratt interview.

sanctuary to be used as venues for the festival service. Since the early 2000s, the festivals have mostly been multi-generational.¹²³

Each festival tends to reflect the specialty of the conductor. The planning team takes care to rotate specialties based on expertise in children's choirs, conductors who specialize in working with youth and adult singers, and composers of church music, who are encouraged to include their choral pieces on the program. For festival milestones, new choral compositions or arrangements are commissioned.

The festival library currently has a list of over 300 pieces that have been used in festivals from 1979–2017.¹²⁴ When festival planning begins the following summer, this list is updated to include the pieces performed at the previous festival. While they call this list a “library,” the music is not stored physically in one place. It is stored in the libraries of the member churches and the list reflects the titles that they already should own as a result of participation in previous festivals.

During the planning phase, the guest conductor is asked to select about half of the repertoire as new works and the other half from the existing library list. Composers are encouraged to include some of their own works, as well as music applicable to the various seasons of the church year.

We try to ask the directors to get some selections from within the liturgical year, be it, you know, something from Christmas, or Easter, or Advent, or Lent, or Thanksgiving. Something new as well as some (existing) anthems, to be as diverse as we can.¹²⁵

Usually, three pieces are programmed for the youth choir, comprised of grades three through twelve. One piece is programmed for the high-school singers (grades nine

¹²³ Michael Noonan Interview.

¹²⁴ See Appendix A.

¹²⁵ Michael Noonan Interview.

to twelve). Three pieces are programmed for the combined adult choirs and three pieces are programmed for all of the festival singers. In recent years, accompaniment has included a brass quartet, flute, guitar, bass guitar, percussion and occasionally a hand bell choir in addition to the organ and piano.

In addition to leading the rehearsals and conducting the festival concert, each guest conductor presents a 90-minute workshop on a subject of their choosing, related to church music. These workshops are free and open to the public beyond those who register for the festival. The rotation of specialties assures a wide variety of topics for the workshops, which adds to the ongoing success of the festival in improving choral singing in the area churches. These workshops are usually attended by the directors of the choirs participating in the festival and often are attended by other church musicians from within the region. Several well-known and popular festival conductors have been invited back to conduct the festival multiple times. Because of that, the festival history is more reflective of the conductors and the music, especially newly commissioned music by the festival than it is a chronological narrative.

During the planning phase, the director of the festival is asked to choose a topic for the workshop. The topics frequently focus on choral methods, the philosophy of church music, or sometimes they are a reading session of new music. To the extent that information on the workshop is available, it is included with the information for that festival. Unlike the history of the directors and the music list, there is not a complete record of the workshop topics. The topic of the workshop does not appear in the programs for the festival concerts. Also, the newspapers are inconsistent about publishing information about the workshop. Some years, the articles are lengthy and include all of

the information provided by the Ecumenical Council. Most often, the articles are short and just give basic information like the time, place, and the conductor.

The workshop component was added early on in the process, beginning with Donald P. Lang, who conducted the festival for the first time in 1973. Lang was a doctoral student in Choral Conducting at the University of Hartford, Hartt School of Music and was also the Music Director of the First Methodist Church in Mystic.¹²⁶ Lang conducted the festival again in 1974, 1976, and 1980. Lang is now Professor Emeritus of Music at the State University of New York at Fredonia.¹²⁷ Lang also co-founded the Chautauqua Youth Chorus in 1988.¹²⁸

George Kent was conductor of the 1975 festival. Kent is Professor of Music *Emeritus* at the University of Rhode Island and also founded the Chorus of Westerly, a large civic chorus in Westerly Rhode Island. Kent was its director from 1959 until 2012.¹²⁹ Since its beginning, the Chorus of Westerly has included both adult and children. In 1991, the Chorus of Westerly purchased a historic building that had once been a Catholic church and named it George Kent Performance Hall.¹³⁰ Connie Dutton, the choral director at nearby Ledyard High School was the director for the 1977 Festival.

Beginning in 1978, the festival began to seek conductors with a national reputation. They didn't have to search very far for the first conductor. Roberta Bitgood (1908–2007) from nearby New London, Connecticut, was an organist, composer and

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "Emeritus Faculty," Fredonia State University of New York, <http://fredonia.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2015-2016/Catalog/Faculty/Emeritus-Faculty-and-Staff> (accessed February 2, 2018).

¹²⁸ "Chautauqua Youth Chorus," Fredonia State University of New York, <http://home.fredonia.edu/music/community/child-chorale> (accessed February 2, 2018).

¹²⁹ "Department of Music," University of Rhode Island, <https://web.uri.edu/music/meet/george-kent/> (accessed February 2, 2018).

¹³⁰ "The George Kent Performance Hall," Chorus of Westerly, <https://www.chorusofwesterly.org/george-kent-performance-hall> (accessed February 3, 2018).

choral director of national prominence. Despite her education and talent, Bitgood struggled early in her career. “She had the highest credentials—a doctorate from Union Theological Seminary in New York, but she still encountered gender discrimination when she applied for jobs three-quarters of a century ago.”¹³¹

Bitgood’s first important position as organist was at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield, N.J. She also held full time positions in Buffalo, New York, Riverside California and in Michigan.¹³² After retiring from full-time work, she moved back to New London and was music director at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Mystic. In 1975, Bitgood was elected the first female president of the American Guild of Organists, a position she held until 1981. Her published output includes seventy choral and organ pieces.¹³³ The Roberta Bitgood Scholarship was created in 1993 by the New London chapter of the American Guild of Organists.¹³⁴ Four of Bitgood’s children’s choir pieces are included in the library of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival: *Christ Went Up Into the Hills Alone*, *God of All Lovely Sounds*, *How Excellent Thy Name*, and *Holy Spirit, Hear Us* (published by Lorenz Corporation.)¹³⁵ The 2004 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival was dedicated to her.

In 1979, Helen Kemp (1918–2015) was conductor of the festival. Kemp was a composer and an iconic children’s choir expert on the faculty of Westminster Choir College. Fourteen of Kemp’s pieces remain in print, published by Choristers Guild, Augsburg Publishing, and Lorenz Corporation. Kemp and her techniques with children’s

¹³¹ Anne M. Hamilton, “From Precocious Child To Prominent Composer, Organist,” *Hartford Current*, August 19, 2007.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “Roberta Bitgood,” *The Day*, 4/18/2007.

¹³⁴ “History of the Roberta Bitgood Organ Scholarship,” Roberta Bitgood Commons, <http://www.bitgood.electronics.net/scholarship.html> (accessed March 20, 2017).

¹³⁵ Mystic Ecumenical Choir Festival Library list (see Appendix A).

choirs are referenced in numerous journal articles. Kemp was also the subject of a 1993 doctoral dissertation, *Body, mind, spirit, voice: Helen Kemp and the development of the children's choir movement* by Christine Bordeaux Farrior.¹³⁶ Farrior documents how Kemp was successful with children's choirs at a church in Oklahoma and how awareness grew of her techniques as she presented them at workshops nationally, ultimately becoming the Director of Workshops and Festivals for the Chorister's Guild, a national organization dedicated to the cause of children's choirs. Ultimately, Kemp returned to teach at Westminster Choir College, her alma mater.¹³⁷ Kemp's influence on the children's choir movement had international significance.

During her career, Kemp guest conducted in all fifty states and in five provinces of Canada, and led festivals and directed seminars on training children's choirs in England, Holland, Canada, Finland, Germany and Sweden. She presented lectures and workshops about the child's voice and children's choirs to many national musical organizations.¹³⁸

One of Kemp's most important techniques is in developing the child's singing voice, which can be differentiated from their speaking voice. Kemp taught that children should be taught to bring their head voice down. Writer Kenneth Phillips discusses this top-down approach:

Helen Kemp, a leader in the American children's choir movement, has noted that by the time children are seven years old, they will often have picked up one of two singing habits: the whispery, breathy, puny voice or the loud, boisterous, neck-swelling sound. The heavy chest or speaking-voice singing so often cultivated in America's classrooms is fast producing a nation of nonsingers. Children can be taught to sing properly in the lower voice only when the upper voice is well established and in balance with the lower; exclusive use of either register is not recommended.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Christine Bordeaux Farrior, "Body, Mind, Spirit, Voice: Helen Kemp and the Development of the Children's Choir Movement" (EdD diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1993), 1, accessed February 26, 2017, ProQuest.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 16–17.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Kenneth H. Phillips, "Training the Child Voice," *Music Educators Journal* 72, no. 4 (December 1985): 19–58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3400517> (accessed February 24, 2017).

In 1962, The Lorenz Company published a collection of Helen Kemp's early articles on development of children's choirs in a book titled *Helen Kemp on Junior Choirs*.¹⁴⁰

Farrior divides Kemp's influence on the children's choir movement into three categories. Church choirs, school choirs, and community choirs. Noting that there was sharp growth in school and community choirs in the 1980s, Kemp extended her focus to include them, thus increasing her influence on the children's choir movement further.¹⁴¹

A video documentary on Kemp's work with children's choirs called *A Helen Kemp Portrait* is published by the Chorister's Guild. Kemp also has five books in publication. Kemp conducted the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival again in 1983. The festival library includes five of her compositions: *Candlelight*, *Burning Bright*, (arr. M. Kemp, Augsburg Publishing), *God's Great Lights*, (Concordia Publishing House), *A Lenten Love Song* (Choristers Guild), *Lord of All*, (Choristers Guild), and *Prayer Litany* (arr. M. Kemp, Choristers Guild).¹⁴²

Composer Philip Dietterich conducted the festival for the first time in 1981. He was invited back to conduct it again in 1984, 1987, and 1999. According to Rev. Pratt, Dietterich and composer Hal Hopson were two festival favorites. "They were both very popular right then, and of course, with the audience, their music was popular."¹⁴³ Pratt discussed a bit of the planning process that brought Dietterich and Hopson to conduct the festival in the early years of it and the long friendship with both composers that resulted from their many visits.

¹⁴⁰ Farrior, "Body, Mind," 59.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 127.

¹⁴² Library list.

¹⁴³ James Pratt interview.

The ecumenical laity used a committee. I served on that committee, but so did one or two other ministers. It was mostly a laity decision and that was why they were chosen. Most of these people I had never heard of until they came here. Philip Dietterich and Hal Hopson had both written music and done festivals before this one, and they were both house guests of ours. The Dietterichs were a little shy, so we'd leave them a key to the house and let them come and go whenever they wanted.¹⁴⁴

Dietterich's biographical information is as follows:

PHILIP R. DIETTERICH (b. 1931) was born into a musical family in Buffalo, New York. A lifelong Methodist he is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, The Boston University School of Theology and Union Theological Seminary, New York City. For most of his adult life he was the full time Minister of Music at First United Methodist Church in Westfield, New Jersey. A widely published composer of church music his "Followers of the Lamb" has been a best-selling anthem in the Hope catalog for many years. Mr. Dietterich now lives in retirement in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts.¹⁴⁵

Dietterich was commissioned to arrange *The Joyful Saints of God*, (Carl Fischer Music) an SAB youth choir piece based on a Shaker tune, for the 1999 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in honor of Rev. Newell Bishop. There are eleven additional pieces by Dietterich in the festival library, including these that are still in publication:

Carol of the Advent, (Hope Publishing Company), *Come Dance and Sing Around the Ring*, (Maurice River Press), *Come One, Come All, Come Follow*, (Choristers Guild), *Followers of the Lamb* (Hope Publishing Company), and *Psalm 23*, (Hope Publishing Company).¹⁴⁶

The 1982 festival was led by Joanne and Jack Roland. This couple were long-time ministers of West Side Presbyterian Church in Ridgewood, New Jersey. Joanne conducted the choirs and Jack was organist.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ "Dietterich, Philip," Hope, <http://www.hopepublishing.com/html/main.isx?sub=307&search=482> (accessed February 3, 2018).

¹⁴⁶ Library list.

¹⁴⁷ Betsy Murphy, "West Side longtime minister of music retires," *The Record*, September 12, 2014.

Hal H. Hopson (b. 1933) conducted the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival for the first time in 1986. He was invited back to conduct the 1991 and 2000 festivals. Hopson is a graduate of Baylor University (B.S.) and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.S.M.). As a full-time composer and arranger, Hopson has over 1800 works in publication for church choirs of all ages, organ, harpsichord, and hand bells. Four of Hopson's specialties as a composer are concertato-style anthems, responsorial psalms, liturgical services, and hymn tunes. Hopson has also worked as a full-time church musician and as a music professor at Westminster Choir College and Scarritt Graduate School.¹⁴⁸ Hopson received a unique honor in 1976.

God with Us, a cantata by Hal Hopson, was chosen during the American Bicentennial, 1976, for placement in a capsule to be opened and performed at the Tercentennial in 2076. This composition was selected because it was judged to be representative of choral music of the century.¹⁴⁹

The Mystic Area Ecumenical Council commissioned a new piece by Hopson for the 2000 choir festival, honoring The Rev. James L. Pratt, founder of the festival. The resulting work is a concertato-style anthem, *O Praise Ye the Lord*, (Carl Fischer Music). Based on a hymn tune by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry, the piece is scored for unison treble choir, SATB, and organ, with optional parts for brass and hand bells. Michael Noonan discussed the creative process of the commission. The piece was intended to be a surprise for Pratt. But with the method for fund raising through the churches, it was not possible for it to be a complete surprise. At the time, some of the festivals were using hand bells, so they wanted a full three octaves of hand bells for the piece in addition to

¹⁴⁸ Condensed from Hopson's biography appearing on numerous music publisher websites.

¹⁴⁹ "Hal H. Hopson," MorningStar Music, <https://www.morningstarmusic.com/composers/h/hopson> (accessed February 3, 2017).

the choirs, organ and brass.¹⁵⁰ The festival library includes other published works by Hopson:

All Nature Sings the Praise of God, (Lorenz Corporation), *Alleluia, Sing with High Delight*, (Alfred Music Company), *Antiphonal Psalm*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Boy-Child of Mary*, (Agape), *Christmas Dance*, (Harold Flammer Music), *Dance and Sing for the Lord Will Be With Us*, (Choristers Guild), *God is Our Song*, (Carl Fischer), *Great Soaring Spirit* (GIA Publications), *He is Mine*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Lord, Lead Us Day by Day*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Lord, O Lord, Your Name is Wonderful*, (Choristers Guild), *Lord of All, Most Holy*, (Shawnee Press), *O Lord, You Know Me Completely*, (Choristers Guild), *O Praise the Lord Who Made All Beauty*, (Choristers Guild), *Praise the Lord*, (Shawnee Press), *Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above* (Hope Publishing Company), *Sing to the Lord*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Sound the Trumpet! Praise Him!* (Theodore Presser), *The Day of Pentecost*, (GIA Publications), *The Gift of Love*, Hope Publishing Company, and *When In Our Music God is Glorified*, (Hope Publishing Company).¹⁵¹

Douglas E. Wagner conducted the festival in 1985. Wagner is an A.S.C.A.P award-winning composer. He taught high school music for thirty years and now devotes his time to composing and editing music. He has over 3000 pieces in publication.¹⁵² His “music has been performed in concert settings, on television and on radio broadcasts in the United States, as well as on concert programs in more than two dozen foreign countries.”¹⁵³

James Litton conducted the 1988 festival and again in 1990. Unlike some of the previous conductors, Litton is well-known internationally as a conductor.

Dr. Litton has conducted choral and orchestral works throughout five continents, and regularly leads workshops and seminars in the United States and abroad. During past seasons he has conducted the Berkshire Choral Festival, at the Tanglewood Music Festival, and at music festivals

¹⁵⁰ Michael Noonan Interview.

¹⁵¹ Library list.

¹⁵² Condensed from Wagner’s biographical information on numerous music publisher websites.

¹⁵³ “About Doug,” Music of Douglas E. Wagner, (The), <http://douglasewagner.com/about-doug/> (accessed March 3, 2017).

in Canada, in Prague, Guatemala, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, France, Poland, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan and South Africa.¹⁵⁴

At the time Litton first conducted the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival, he was three years into his long tenure as conductor of the American Boy Choir. Litton is the conductor on numerous major-label recordings with the American Boy Choir and other ensembles. There are several reviews of his recordings in published journals. A unique aspect of the festival in 1990 is that Litton brought singers from his group with him to participate in the festival.

When he came back two years later, he brought some students from the American Boy Choir and we had each of them, I think, on a few pieces. If I recall, they got to have the stage and they sang with us, too. That involved the community at large as well because those kids were being housed throughout the community.¹⁵⁵

Sue Ellen Page (1949–2016), a composer, author, and children’s choir specialist conducted the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival in 1992 and 1998. Page received her musical training at the Westminster Choir College. She was a student of Helen Kemp, and later taught there. Page conducted the children and youth choirs at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, New Jersey, and was Artistic Director of the Trenton Children’s Chorus, which she co-founded.¹⁵⁶ Two of Page’s three pieces in the festival catalog are still in publication: *Every Morning’s Sun*, (Choristers Guild) and *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine*, (Hinshaw).

Michael Jochen, a music educator, church musician, and published composer, conducted the 1993 festival. Jochen is Professor of Music and Director of Graduate Music Education at Towson University in Maryland. In addition to his choral publications,

¹⁵⁴ “James Litton,” Primarily A Cappella, <http://www.singers.com/choral/director/James-Litton/> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁵⁵ Michael Noonan Interview.

¹⁵⁶ Condensed from Page’s biographical information on numerous music publisher websites.

Jothan has also authored several books on choral methods.¹⁵⁷ Four of Jothan's pieces are in the festival library: *And I Will Praise Him*, (Choristers Guild), *A Christmas Introit Processional*, (Choristers Guild), *I Was Glad*, (Beckenhorst Press), and *You Are the Branches*, (Choristers Guild).

John Horman conducted the 1994 festival and was invited back to conduct the 2001 festival. Horman is a retired music educator and church musician. He was director of music at Warner Memorial Presbyterian Church in Kensington, Maryland for over forty years and is now organist and music director at First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C. His output includes music for choirs of all ages.¹⁵⁸

The Mystic Area Ecumenical Council commissioned the two-part youth and children's choir piece *One Holy Night in Bethlehem*, (Abingdon Press), in 2001. Other published works by Horman in the festival library include:

Blessing, (Hinshaw), *Bring Peace to Our World*, (Choristers Guild), *Jesus Christ is Risen Today*, (Choristers Guild), *Marchin' to the Beat of God*, (Abingdon Press), *Mary Told the Good News*, (Theodore Presser), *Out of the Depths*, (Sacred Music Press), *Plenty Good Room*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Psalm 67*, (Choristers Guild), *Why, Lord, Why*, (Theodore Presser).

Allen Pote was a minister of music in Texas and in Florida before dedicating his career to composing church choral music. He is also co-founder of the Pensacola Children's Chorus. Pote was a past national board member of the Choristers Guild.¹⁵⁹ In addition to the commissioned piece for the 2018 festival, there are six of his published works in the festival library:

¹⁵⁷ "Michael Jothan," Lorenz Corporation, <https://www.lorenz.com/more-information/meet-our-composers/composers?itemId=Composer:2> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁵⁸ "John D. Horman," Hymns Etc., <http://www.hymnsetc.com/horman.html> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁵⁹ Condensed from Pote's biographical information on several music publisher websites.

An Advent Prayer, (Hinshaw), *Calypso Carol*, (Hope Publishing Company), *Festival Alleluia*, (Choristers Guild), *God is Our Refuge*, (Hope Publishing Company), *The Lord is My Shepherd*, (Choristers Guild), and *Sing a Song of Praise*, (Choristers Guild).

Michael Kemp and his wife Janice were directors of the festival in 1996 and again in 2004. Michael is the son of Helen Kemp. He is well-known as an expert in working with youth and adult choirs.

Michael earned a music degree from Westminster Choir College. A violinist and violist, Michael is Minister of Music at Abingdon Presbyterian Church in Abingdon, Pennsylvania, and a nationally known music workshop clinician in the areas of youth and adult choirs. On several occasions Michael and Helen Kemp have been surprised to learn they were both serving as clinicians for the same music workshops, Helen as a children's choir specialist, and Michael as a youth and adult choir clinician.¹⁶⁰

According to Farrior, music in the Kemp household was always serious business.¹⁶¹ In their work at the festivals, Michael worked with the adults and youth, and Janice worked with the children. That is also how they divided up as a team conducting the festivals in 1996 and 2004.

Michael and Janice were co-directors. I think she did the children, and Michael conducted the youth and adults. Then she also accompanied the festival that year (2004) and it was held at Noank Baptist. She played for him and he played when she directed the children, so we didn't have to worry about an accompanist.¹⁶²

In 2004, The Mystic Area Ecumenical Council commissioned Michael Kemp for two pieces. The festival honored Roberta Bitgood that year. The first piece is an arrangement of Helen Kemp's unison piece, *Candlelight, Burning Bright*, (Augsburg Publishing), for SATB and Unison choruses, with piano and violin. The second commissioned piece is *Welcome Little One* (Augsburg Fortress), for SATB chorus and

¹⁶⁰ Farrior, "Body, Mind," 70–71.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁶² Michael Noonan Interview.

optional keyboard accompaniment. The festival library also includes *Prayer for Today*, (Choristers Guild), arranged by Michael Kemp. Gerre Hancock, longtime organist and choirmaster at St. Thomas Church in Manhattan, conducted the 1997 festival.

Betty Bedsole conducted the 2002 Festival. Bedsole is a children's choir specialist and has been on the music faculty of Union University in Tennessee, Palm Beach Atlantic University, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Bedsole also worked for the Baptist Sunday School Board as a consultant for children's music, served on the Board of Directors of the Choristers Guild and is certified to teach Orff and Kodaly methods.¹⁶³ She is the author of *Songs for Young Singers*, (Lifeway Christian Resources), and the ecumenical children's choir curriculum, *Stepping Stones*, (Choristers Guild). The 2003 festival was conducted by Lee Gwozdz, former director of music at the Corpus Christi Cathedral, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Lynnel Joy Jenkins, a faculty member at Westminster Choir College and artistic director of the Princeton Girlchoir, was conductor of the festival in 2005 and 2008. Jenkins had been a director with the American Boy Choir before that organization disbanded. Jenkins also conducted the 2018 festival.¹⁶⁴ The workshop presented by Jenkins at the 2008 festival was titled "Ideals from the Choral Rehearsal."¹⁶⁵ Jenkins' topic for the 2018 festival workshop is "Engaging Your Singers in the Choral Rehearsal."¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ "Betty Bedsole," Choristers Guild, Our Composers, <https://www.choristersguild.org/document//60/> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁶⁴ Noonan Interview.

¹⁶⁵ "Choir Festival Concert Sunday at Groton Congregational Church," *Westerly Sun*, March 28, 2008.

¹⁶⁶ "Mystic Area Ecumenical Council to sponsor concert, workshop," *Norwich Bulletin*, February 27, 2018.

C. Michael Hawn was conductor of the 2006 festival. Hawn is Distinguished Professor of Music *Emeritus* at the SMU Perkins School of Theology. Previously he had been on the music faculty at the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina. Hawn is an ordained Baptist minister and is a composer and author of several books on church music.¹⁶⁷

Tom Kendzia conducted the 2007 festival. Kendzia is a composer and parish musician with the Roman Catholic Church, having served churches in Connecticut, Arizona and Rhode Island. He also works as a liturgy consultant for several companies.¹⁶⁸ Kendzia's youth choir piece *Shine Down* published by Oregon Catholic Press (OCP), was composed for and dedicated to the 2007 festival. Fourteen other pieces, by OCP, are in the festival library: *Changed My Heart, Clothed in Love, Endless is Your Love, The Eyes and Hands of Christ, Give Me Jesus, Halle, Halle, Lord, Come and Save Us, Out of Darkness, Over My Head, Pieta, Stand By Me, and We Will Want No More*.¹⁶⁹

Michael Bedford conducted the 2009 festival. Bedford is an organist, choral director and composer and worked full time for the St. John's Episcopal Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He frequently leads workshops and clinics. Bedford has had over 200 titles of choral music in print publication through 15 different music publishers.¹⁷⁰ The festival was held in Noank that year. Bedford particularly liked riding around Noank and seeing the historic homes. Michael Noonan mentioned that Bedford was fascinated by a large house that overlooks the Fisher's Island Sound that was once owned by a family named

¹⁶⁷ "C. Michael Hawn," SMU Perkins School of Theology, <https://www.smu.edu/Perkins/FacultyAcademics/DirectoryList/Hawn> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁶⁸ OCP. "Tom Kendzia." <https://www.ocp.org/en-us/artists/1592/tom-kendzia> (accessed March 3, 2017).

¹⁶⁹ Library list.

¹⁷⁰ "The 41st Mystic Area Choir Festival." (Noank Baptist Church, Noank, CT, February 22, 2009). Program Notes.

Clinton in recent years, but was built by a wealthy shipbuilder named Robert Palmer in the 19th century. Noonan shared a funny story about one of their rides around Noank: “I took him around Noank and he was fascinated when he was taking pictures of this house, and I said, ‘Yeah, you know it's known to be haunted.’”¹⁷¹ The workshop led by Bedford at the 2009 festival was titled “Routine + Variety = Success.”¹⁷²

In 2009, the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council commissioned Bedford to compose a new piece *The Greatest of These is Love* that was scheduled to be performed at the 2010 festival in honor of Jane Schmidt, general chairperson of the festival from 1993–2009. Because of Schmidt’s death in July of 2009, she did not get to hear it performed. Due to the unusual circumstances, the piece premiered at Schmidt’s funeral and then was performed again at the 2010 festival.

In that festival (2009), we had announced that an anthem would be written by Bedford for Jane. I know that it was slow coming in. We were going to do it for the festival, but Jane passed away, that's right, it was premiered at the festival, but technically it was premiered at her funeral. We got some local youth choir members because she passed away,...The score had just come in and I don't know if it was even published. I think we were all reading manuscripts, handwritten manuscript from Michael. Beautiful anthem, beautiful anthem. So yes, she never got to really hear it. I think maybe the text was read to her.¹⁷³

The festival library includes these other published pieces by Bedford: *I Sing the Mighty Power of God*, (Choristers Guild), *Jubilate Deo*, (Choristers Guild), *Sing and Dance*, *Children of God*, (Hinshaw), and *Spirit of God*, (Choristers Guild).¹⁷⁴

Beginning in 2010, the festival planning committee sought to bring back to the festival some of the conductors who had involvement with it early on. Jamie Spillane,

¹⁷¹ Noonan Interview.

¹⁷² “Ecumenical Council Sponsors Festival Concert,” *Westerly Sun*, March 19, 2009.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Library list.

Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Connecticut (UConn), conducted the festival in 2010 and in 2016. Prior to UConn, Spillane was on the faculty at Roberts Wesleyan Iowa, Iowa Wesleyan College and University of Arizona. Spillane grew up in Mystic and conducts the annual Carol Sing at Mystic Seaport. Prior to his college-teaching days, Spillane had been chairman of the music department at Ledyard High School, in Ledyard, Connecticut, where the program he led had over 400 singers in 12 choirs.¹⁷⁵ Noonan reflected on the festivals conducted by Spillane and his years singing with him at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

Like I said, he's gone full circle. He's at the top. So when he did the festival, last year, I think, or a couple of years ago, whenever it was, he said, "You know, I grew up about two houses, I think it was about two buildings away from Union Baptist." And he and I went to St. Mark's together. So that was kind of fun.¹⁷⁶

The festival workshop that Spillane led in 2010 was titled "Pursuing Excellence with Volunteer Choirs of All Ages."¹⁷⁷

Rev. Walter Edmunds conducted the 2011 festival. The workshop Edmunds led in 2011 was titled "A New Age in Making Vocal Music." (For more information about Edmunds, see section 5.2.)

The 2012 festival was conducted by Sally K. Albrecht. She is Director of School Choral and Classroom Publications for Alfred Publishing. Albrecht is well-known as a composer, conductor, and clinician. She has a set of DVDs published on choral movement and has authored books on the subject, as well as a book on choral warm ups.

¹⁷⁵ "The 48th Mystic Area Choir Festival" (Union Baptist Church, Mystic, CT, February 28, 2016). Program Notes.

¹⁷⁶ Noonan Interview.

¹⁷⁷ "Festival Concert," *Westerly Sun*, March 18, 2010.

Albrecht has over 325 published choral works.¹⁷⁸ The workshop that Albrecht led was titled “Warm-Ups and Workouts for the Choir,”¹⁷⁹ She dedicated her piece *All God’s Children* (Alfred Publishing), to the 2012 Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. According to Noonan, this piece was not commissioned by the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. Instead, Noonan said that the piece premiered at the 2012 festival and Albrecht was so enthusiastic about the festival, that she dedicated the piece to it.¹⁸⁰ The following other published pieces are in the festival library: *Clap Your Hands, Each of Us Has a Light, Elijah and Joshua, Gloria, Hashivenu, In This Room* (Harold Flammer), *Walk in the Kingdom*, and *Ye Shall Have a Song*.¹⁸¹ All are published by Alfred Music except for the one noted.

Greg Gilpin conducted the 2013 festival. Gilpin is an award-winning ASCAP composer/arranger and his music is widely published. He regularly conducts choral festivals. Gilpin is also the Director of Educational Choral Publications for Shawnee Press.¹⁸² Six of Gilpin’s published pieces appear in the festival library:

Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel? (Shawnee Press), *Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burnin’*, (Cola Voce Music), *In Vurtue Tua*, (Heritage Music Press), *Instrument of Peace*, (Alfred Music), *There’s Room for Many-A-More*, (Heritage Music Press), and *Who Will Keep God’s Lambs?* (Choristers Guild).

Mark Patterson, conductor of the 2014 festival, has regularly won the ASCAP Award in composition. He has over 300 published choral works of varying styles and is the Director of Music at Salisbury Presbyterian Church in Midlothian, VA. Patterson

¹⁷⁸ “The 44th Mystic Area Choir Festival” (St. Mary Mother of the Redeemer Church, Groton, CT, April 22, 2012). Program Notes.

¹⁷⁹ Albrecht, “Together in Song.”

¹⁸⁰ Michael Noonan Interview.

¹⁸¹ Library list.

¹⁸² “The 45th Mystic Area Choir Festival.” (Noank Baptist Church, Noank, CT, April 28, 2013). Program Notes.

frequently conducts choral festivals and leads choral director workshops. In addition to choral works, he also has published works for piano, and has published musicals.¹⁸³

Three of Patterson's pieces are in the festival library: *For the Beauty of the Earth*, (MorningStar Music Publishers), *Sing Out With Joy*, (Choristers Guild), and *Will You Be Ready*, (Choristers Guild).¹⁸⁴

Victor C. Johnson, conductor of the 2015 festival, is a widely published composer with over 250 published works. As a sophomore in high school, Johnson had his first work published by the Lorenz Corporation. Johnson is a children's music specialist. He is Artistic Director of the Children's Choir of Texas and also teaches at the Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts and is Minister of Worship and Arts at Shiloh Baptist Church in Plano, Texas.¹⁸⁵ The workshop led by Johnson was titled "A Choral Reading Session."¹⁸⁶ Three of Johnson's published pieces are in the festival library: *Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise*, (Lorenz), *Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace*, (Lorenz), and *Witness*, (Heritage Music Press).

Mark Daniel Merritt conducted the 2017 festival. Merritt is a native of Noank, CT, and grew up singing in the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival as a member of Noank Baptist Church. Festival leader Michael Noonan reflected on the 2017 festival in an interview with this author:

I was thinking as I was driving over here. I was thinking, you know, I'm very passionate about this festival and it was so personal this year with you in it. Everybody said it was a very different festival. It was very different because you made it. You could talk just as much as you wanted

¹⁸³ "The 46th Mystic Area Choir Festival" (Union Baptist Church, Mystic, CT, March 30, 2014). Program Notes.

¹⁸⁴ Library list.

¹⁸⁵ "The 47th Mystic Area Choir Festival" (St. Mary Mother of the Redeemer Church, Groton, CT, March 15, 2015).

¹⁸⁶ "Mystic Council Sponsors 2015 Choir Festival Concert," *Westerly Sun*, March 12, 2015.

and you did a great job just making the people feel connected with it. It was a very unique festival and I said, “wow,” because it’s Mark and it’s a connection with his home church, with him coming back. We know each other, and it all gelled together.¹⁸⁷

Merritt is a candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at the University of South Carolina, and holds a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Merritt is an ASCAP composer and arranger and has had numerous commissions, including a major commission in 2007 funded by the Kentucky Arts Council and the Catlettsburg, Kentucky Leadership Club, to compose the score to the musical play *River Dreams* which had its world premiere that year in Ashland, Kentucky. From 2002 to 2012, Merritt was Associate Director and then Director of VOCE Choral Ensemble, an auditioned choral group in Mount Airy, NC, that he helped to found. From 2012 to 2015, he was the Minister of Music at Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in San Antonio, Texas.

During Merritt’s years at Holy Spirit, he helped to organize collaborative singing events with other churches. In 2013, he conducted a joint choral evensong with the choir of Holy Spirit and the choir of Scenic Hills Seventh Adventist Church. Clergy from both churches were involved in the service. The two churches are located near each other in San Antonio, and the two choirs would often join together for services after that, singing at Scenic Hills on Saturday and then singing together again at Holy Spirit on Sunday. In 2015, Merritt led joint choral evensong services with the choirs of Holy Spirit and Travis Park United Methodist Church in San Antonio. One was held at Travis Park on Palm Sunday and the other at Holy Spirit on Good Friday. Both of the services featured combined performances of the Faure *Requiem*.

¹⁸⁷ Michael Noonan interview.

Merritt is currently Director of Music Ministries for Grace United Methodist Church in Columbia, SC. The workshop Merritt led for the 2017 festival was titled “Crash Course on the Human Voice for Church Choir Singers and Their Directors”¹⁸⁸ Two of Merritt’s pieces are in the festival library: *The Church’s One Foundation*, and *Deo Gratias* (Dream Mill Music).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ “Mystic hosts choir concert and workshop,” *The Day*, March 7, 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Library list.

CHAPTER 7

THE MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL CHOIR FESTIVAL AS A MODEL

This paper has documented the history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival. The fact that it is now in its fiftieth year and still going strong demonstrates an admirable level of success. The question remains if the methods used to develop this festival can be used to form festivals similar to it in other areas.

The conditions in the mid-1960s, after 100 years of music education in New England, and an *a cappella* choir movement throughout U.S. high schools helped greatly to aid the formation of a choir festival. The combination of clergy and lay leadership in Mystic and the high level of cooperation between the area churches fifty years ago and today may be unique. When Rev. Pratt was asked about the “secret ingredient” for the success of the festival, he said it was the work of the lay leadership. Pratt mentioned several people, such as Russell Shafer, long-time music director at Noank Baptist, Roberta Bitgood, and Jane Schmidt, specifically. When Michael Noonan was asked the same question, he pointed to the clergy leadership, especially in the early years of the festival. Noonan specifically mentioned Rev. Pratt and Rev. Bishop being active in music leadership in their churches as examples. It is logical to conclude that both Pratt and Noonan are correct in some respects and that it is the combination of the clergy with musical interests, along with passionate lay leaders that has made the festival a success.

It is likely impossible to have the precise conditions that existed in the mid-1960s from which the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival was born. Equally unlikely is the

chance of having two senior ministers in close proximity that are well-trained in music and lead choirs in their churches. The continuity of the leaders of the Mystic festival is a big part of its success. However, a community seeking to start a festival can look to this as a model. It may be difficult to find that kind of passionate leadership but it is most likely not unique to Mystic, CT. While they may not find clergy leaders like Rev. Pratt and Rev. Bishop, it is likely that there are clergy leaders who have an interest in collaborative musical services among local churches.

There are several characteristics about the Mystic festival that can be examined as a possible model for other communities. The ecumenical council is an important key to the festival, according to Noonan. Each church pays a certain amount each year to support the council. It is part of the church's annual budget. The amount they pay is based on the number of church members. When it is time for the new festival music to be ordered, the ecumenical council pays for the music used by its member churches that participate in the festival. Through participation in the festival, the council helps the member churches build their choral library with four or five new pieces of music each year for which they did not have to use their music budget. Since the music for each festival is chosen based on the various seasons of the church year, the choirs are able to sing those pieces when they fit the season. Many communities have some sort of interfaith council that regularly plans events that bring churches together. The American Guild of Organists has local and state chapters where church musicians can work together to form collaborative singing events as well.

When the joint singing events in Mystic began taking place in the mid-1960s, it was impossible to know that they would continue and thrive fifty years later. When asked

about that, Rev. Pratt said, “I had no idea if it would still be going years later. I hoped it would.” What they did know is that they had a commitment to do one collaborative concert or service each year.¹⁹⁰ For a community to begin a new festival, they may possibly start the same way. They can get multiple churches together for a performance and agree to do one thing together each year.

The Mystic festival has tried several new approaches over the years as indicated previously. After several combined adult choir events, the children’s festivals were started. Festivals then began involving adults together with the children. As the history has shown, several of the leaders started singing in it as children or youth. Two who participated in the festivals as youth have gone on to finish advanced degrees in music and have been invited back to conduct it.

Workshops were added. The workshops add to the body of knowledge about choral music in the wider community. Regionally-recognized conductors directed the festivals at first, then nationally-recognized conductors. A community who wishes to start a successful festival in their own area can look at some of the things that the Mystic festival has done that have brought it success. They can gain an understanding from the history of the Mystic festival that the way a festival begins is not necessarily how it will be fifty years later. As communities change, the festival may change with it.

Bringing in prominent conductors and composers of church music adds great impact to the festival. Michael Noonan discussed how it especially impacts the children and youth singers to sing music that was written for the festival, or to have the composer of the music conducting it.

¹⁹⁰ James Pratt Interview.

It is nice getting that perspective and I think the kids really appreciate it. It is kind of cool for kids. I know for me as a kid, you know, when I'm singing somebody's anthem and they're right there, you know what I mean? My kids think that's cool. Or if they see something that was dedicated to them, or to their festival, or whatever, or commissioned, you know, but just having the composer right there.¹⁹¹

This is a feature of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival that can be utilized in other communities. It takes some effort and fund raising. The Mystic festival has been doing this for a long time, but it is by no means unique to them.

In this paper, a discussion of the history of music in New England churches leading up to the mid-1960s has been presented. A brief history of the ecumenical movement has been discussed, primarily as it relates to church music, particularly the work of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council. The history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival has been documented, beginning with joint church events prior to the festival, the formation of the festival, through various stages of development into the present time. A history of the festival conductors and important music associated with the festival is also recorded here.

Sally Albrecht gave the challenge: "I encourage each and every one of you to create or organize a similar experience in your area."¹⁹² This paper has identified several key characteristics of the Mystic festival that could potentially be used to achieve Albrecht's challenge: (a) work with a local interfaith council, (b) have both clergy and lay leadership, (c) start with one joint musical event and commit to doing at least one such event together every year, (d) adapt when necessary, (e) offer a workshop, (f) bring in guest conductors with a national reputation, and (g) commission new works.

¹⁹¹ Noonan Interview.

¹⁹² Albrecht, "Together in Song."

While no one familiar with the Mystic Area Ecumenical festival agrees that there is a “secret sauce” for its success, the above components can be duplicated in almost any area. It would seem that some core ingredients for creating such an event are hard work, commitment, continuity of leadership, and cooperation. The fifty-year history of the Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival illustrates a potential archetype that could be followed to achieve success elsewhere.

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APPENDIX A

FESTIVAL LIBRARY LIST

MYSTIC AREA CHOIR FESTIVAL

Music Used in Festivals 1979-2017

Update - August 2017

	A = Adults	Y = Youth	C = Children	
Albrecht (Dir, '12)	All God's Children <i>(Dedicated to the 2012 MAEC Choir Festival)</i>			AYC
	Clap Your Hands			Y
	Each of Us Has a Light			C
	Elijah and Joshua			Y
	Gloria			A
	Hashivenu			Y
	In This Room			A
	Walk in the Kingdon			A
	Ye Shall Have a Song			AYC
Bach	Alleluia for Christmas (from Cantata 142)			A
	Come, Dearest Lord			AY
	The Earth is the Lord's (arr. Bitgood)			C
	Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring			C
	Lord, Above All Other Treasures (arr. Bitgood)			C
	To God Be All Glory (arr. Ruppel)			AYC
	With Songs of Rejoicing			Y
Baker/Elliott	Feel Good			YC
Bedford (Dir., '09)	I Sing the Mighty Power of God (FORREST GREEN)			AYC
	The Greatest of These is Love <i>(commissioned for 2009 MAEC festival)</i>			AYC
	Jubilate Deo			Y
	Oh, Come with Body and Mind			C
	Sing and Dance, Children of God			C
	Spirit of God			AYC
Berg	This Little Light of Mine (arr. Berg)			YC
Bernstein	Gloria Tibi			YC
Besig	A Choral Benediction			Y
Beuerle	Thy Steadfast Love			AY
Billings	A Virgin Unspotted (arr. Wagner)			A
	Rejoice, Ye Shining Worlds On High			A
Bitgood (Dir. '78)	Christ Went Up Into the Hills Alone			C
	God of All Lovely Sounds			C
	How Excellent Thy Name			C
	Holy Spirit, Hear Us			C
Bouman	I Lift Up My Eyes to the Hills			YC

	Save Me, O God, By Your Name	YC
	Thanks Be to God	C
Boyce	Praise The Lord: Alleluia (arr. Wagner)	Y
Bridges	O Splendor of God's Glory Bright	Y
Bristol	Let Your Bearing in Life	YC
Bryce	There is Room	C
Burleigh	Order My Steps	AYC
Butler	When We Worship God Through Music (w/ cong.)	AYC
Burrows	Bwana Asifiwe	YC
Buxtehude	Cantate Domino (arr. Ruppel)	AY
	My Jesus Is My Lasting Joy (arr. Bitgood)	C
Caldwell	Song of Praise	Y
Carlson	Alleluia, Lullaby	C
Carter	Hodie Christus Natus Est	A
Cherubini	<i>Like As a Father (arr. Lovelace)</i>	AYC
Coates	Amazing Grace (arr. Coates)	Y
Cool	With the Help of the Spirit of the Lord	YC
Corfe	I Will Magnify Thee	YC
Courtney	Thy Will Be Done	A
Cousins	Glorious Everlasting	A
Curtright	Sing, O Sing	C
Davis	Who Was This Man?	C
Delmonte	Stars Are For Those Who Lift Their Eyes	C
Dietterich	Carol of the Advent	A
(Dir. '81, '84	Come Dance and Sing	AYC
'87, '99)	<i>Come One, Come All, Come Follow</i>	C
	One More Step (w/ cong)	AYC
	Followers of the Lamb (Shaker Tune)	A
	Immortal Love, Forever Full	AYC
	The Joyful Saints of God	Y
	(commissioned for 1999 MAEC festival)	
	Psalms 23	Y
	Simple Gifts	J
	The Strain Upraise of Joy and Praise	C
	The Trumpeters and Singers Were as One	AYC
	Wilt Thou Not Turn Again, O God	A
Dan Edwards	Mary, Where is Your Baby?	YC
Emerson	O Sifuni Mungu	Y
Englert	I Lift Up My Soul	A
Fanshawe	The Lord's Prayer (from African <i>Sanctus</i>)	Y
Faure	Sanctus	C
	Cantique de Jean Racine	A
Ferguson	Marching to Zion	AYC
Forest	Be Thou My Vision	A
Franck	Da Pacem Domine (arr. Goetze)	YC
	O Lord Most Holy	C
	Psalms 150	AYC
French Noel	Happy Advent, Glad New Year	C
Friedell	Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether	A
Gilpin	Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?	YC
(Dir., '13)	Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Brnin'	YC
	In Virtute Tua	A

	Instrument of Peace (based on Prayer of St. Francis)	AYC
	There's Room for Many-A-More	A
	Who Will Keep God's Lambs?	YC
Graham	Have You Seen Three Kings	C
Gregor	Hosanna, Blessed is He (arr. Bitgood)	C
Hampton	A Hymn of St. Francis	YC
	There's a Wideness in God's Mercy	YC
Hampton, K.	Praise His Holy Name (with cong.) (High School, 2015)	YC
Handel	Come, Jesus Holy Son of God	YC
	Lord, Lead Us Day By Day (arr. Hopson)	C
	Praise the Lord (Judas Maccabeus)	Y
Harris	Alleluia	Y
Hawkins	I'm Goin' Up a Yonder arr. Sirvatka	Y
Hawn	Cantai ao Senhor (Rejoice in the Lord) (trad. Brazil)	C
(Dir., '06)	Dios está Aqui (trad. Mexico)	C
	Halle, Halle (Caribbean folk song arr. Mulrain)	AYC
	I Am the World's True Light (trad. Mexico)	YC
	Mantos y Palmas (Mantles and Palms) (trad. Mexico arr. Avila)	C
	Pengyou, Ting (Listen, My Friends) (trad. China)	YC
	Psalms 136 (arr. Mutsoli & Corbitt) (from <i>Four African Hymns</i>)	YC
	Sing with Hearts (Kalinga melody arr. Malicsi)	C
	Thangaraj (Rejoice! Halelu!) (trad. India)	C
	Thuma Mina (Send Us, Lord) (trad. S. Africa - Xhosa)	YC
	Yo Soy la Luz del Mundo (arr. Ascencio)	AYC
Helvey	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot (trad. arr. Helvey)	A
Hayes	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	AYC
Helvey	Swing Low, Sweet Chariot	A
Hogan	I Am His Child	Y
Honore	How Can I Keep From Singing	ACY
Hopson	All Nature Sings the Praise of God	AYC
(Dir., '86, '91, '00)	Alleluia, Sing with High Delight (Mozart/Hopson)	Y
	Antiphonal Psalm 150	C
	Boy-Child of Mary (African Tune)	YC
	Christmas Dance	Y
	Dance and Sing, for the Lord Will Be With Us	AYC
	God is Our Song	AYC
	Great Soaring Spirit	A
	He Is Mine	A
	Laudate Nomen Domini (Tye/Hopson)	A
	Lord, Lead Us Day by Day (Handel/Hopson)	C
	Lord, O Lord, your Name is Wonderful	C
	Lord of All, Most Holy	Y
	O Lord, You Know Me Completely	C
	O Praise the Lord Who Made All Beauty	C
	O Praise Ye the Lord	AYC
	(commissioned for J. Pratt and MAEC in 2000)	
	Praise the Lord (Handel/Hopson)	YC
	Psalm 150	AYC
	Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above	AYC
	Sing to the Lord	C
	Sound the Trumpet! Praise Him! (Haydn/Hopson)	YC
	The Day of Pentecost	C

	The Gift of Love	YC
	When in Our Music God is Glorified	AYC
Horman	Blessing (May the Road Rise to Meet You)	YC
(Dir. '94, '01)	Bring Peace to Our World	C
	Jesus Christ is Risen Today	C
	Marchin' to the Beat of God	YC
	Mary Told the Good News	YC
	One Holy Night in Bethlehem	YC
	<i>(commissioned for 2001 MAEC festival)</i>	
	Out of the Depths	Y
	Plenty Good Room	YC
	Psalm 67	YC
	So Much We Have	C
	Why, Lord, Why?	Y
How	Day By Day	AYC
Hurford	Litany to the Holy Spirit	YC
Ireland	My Song is Love Unknown	A
Johnson	The Lone, Wild Bird (arr. Johnson)	Y
	Earth and All Stars	AYC
Johnson,		
(Victor C.)	Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise	AYC
(Dir. '15)	Lord, Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace	A
	Witness	YC
Jothan	And I Will Praise Him	Y
(Dir. '93)	A Christmas Introit Processional	AYC
	I Was Glad	A
	Sing Hosanna	AYC
	You Are the Branches	Y
Joubert	Torches	C
Kallman	In Thee is Gladness	A
Kemp, H.	Candlelight, Burning Bright (arr. M Kemp)	AYC
(Dir. '79, '83)	<i>(commissioned for 2004 MAEC Choir Festival)</i>	
	God's Great Lights	C
	A Lenten Love Song	C
	Lord of All	C
	Prayer Litany (arr. M. Kemp)	A
Kemp, M.	Prayer for Today (Tucker arr. Kemp)	AYC
(Dir. '96, '04))	Welcome Little Ones	A
	<i>(commissioned for 2004 MAEC Choir Festival)</i>	
Kendzia	Changed My Name	AYC
(Dir., '07)	Chill of the Nightfall	A
	Clothed in Love (with cong.)	AYC
	Endless is Your Love	A
	The Eyes and hands of Christ (with cong.)	AYC
	Give Me Jesus	A
	Halle, Halle (arr. Kendzia) (with cong.)	AYC
	Let the Heavens Rejoice (with cong.)	A
	Let Your Face Shine Upon Us	AYC
	Lord, Come and Save Us	AYC
	Out of Darkness	A
	Over My Head (with cong.)	AYC
	Pieta	A

	Shine Down		YC
	(composed and dedicated to the 2007 MAEC Festival)		
	Stand By Me (arr. Kendzia)		AYC
	We Will Want No More		AYC
Krapf	All Things in Him		Y
Leaf	Come Today With Jubilant Singing		AYC
	Fill the House of God		C
	A Time to Sing Praise		C
Lightfoot	A Jubilant Song		YC
Lindh	Behold, God is My Salvation		AYC
	<i>Lift Up Your Heads</i>		C
	Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove		Y
Lokensgard	Clap Your Hands		Y
Lole	The Father's Love		YC
Lord	Do You Know Your Shepherd's Voice?		AYC
Lovelace	Like As a Father		AYC
	Walk Softly in Springtime		C
Mabry	This Little Light of Mine	(High School 2017)	Y
Manz	E'en So Lord Jesus Quickly Come		A
Martin	Come to the Music		A
	Praise and Exaltation		AYC
Matheny	Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding		A
McDonald	I'm Gonna Sing and Shout!		A
McIver	Shall We Gather		AYC
McNair	All Night, All Day (Spiritual)		C
Mendelssohn	O Come, Let Us Worship (arr. Bitgood)		C
Merriitt (Dir. '17)	Deo Gratias!		A
	The Church's One Foundation		AYC
Messick	Christ Was Born on Christmas Day		C
Miller	I Believe	(High School, 2014)	Y
Mitchell	All Things Bright and Beautiful		Y
Mouret	O Love, How Deep (arr. Long)		C
Mozart	Alleluia, Sing With High Delight (arr. Hopson)		Y
Music	Hosanna in the Highest		AYC
Nelson	Four Anthems For Young Choirs		YC
Owens	A Little Child Brought Light		C
Page	Every Morning's Sun		C
(Dir. '92, '98)	Holy Spirit, Truth Divine		AYC
	Siyahamba (tradd. Zulu arr. Page)		YC
Paradowski	Tunaomba Mungu Atawale		AYC
Parrish	Santo, Santo, Santo		YC
Patterson	For the Beauty of the Earth		YC
(Dir. '14)	Sing Out With Joy		YC
	Will You Be Ready?		YC
Paulus	Lord, Here Am I		YC
Pergolesi	Sing to the Lord God		Y
Pinkham	Evergreen		C
Poston	Jesus Christ, the Apple Tree		YC
Pote	An Advent Prayer		Y
(Dir. '95)	Calypso Carol		Y
	Choral Call to Worship		C
	Festival Alleluia (<i>Wake up to a World of Light</i>)		C

	God is Our Refuge	AY
	The Lord is My Shepherd (Psalm 23)	AYC
	Sing a Song of Praise (Psalm 95)	C
Powell	From the Rising of the Sun	C
	We Give Thee Thanks Today	C
Powell, Ros.	Ascribe to the Lord	YC
Praetorious	Jubilate Deo (arr. Johnson)	C
	That Easter Day with Joy was Bright	C
	To Us is Born	Y
	We Will Praise You	Y
Proulx	Song of Isaiah	Y
Quilter	Non Nobis, Domine	C
Ramseth	Spirit Boundless	C
	Be My Guide	C
Parker/Shaw	I Will Arise	A
Red	All Things Bright and Beautiful	YC
Ridout	Let Us With a Gladsome Mind (<i>Psalm 136</i>)	A
Ruppel	All Things Have Their Time	AY
	God, the Father's Love	AC
	Magnify the Lord with Me (w/ cong)	A
Rutter	All Things Bright and Beautiful	AC
	A Gaelic Blessing	AY
	God Be in My Head	AY
	What Sweeter Music	A
St. Theodolph	All Glory, Laud and Honor	C
Schack	When You Woke that Thursday Morning	A
Schalk	Before the Marvel of this Night	AY
	Lift High the Cross	AYC
	My Song is Love Unknown	AYC
	Schubert/Bock Holy is the Lord	Y
Schrader	Antiphonal Hosanna	AYC
	Here I Am Lord	AYC
	Order My Steps	YC
	Revelation 19 (arr. Schrader)	Y
Schram	I Will Serve You	YC
Scott	Gracious Spirit Dwell With Me	Y
	When Morning Stars Together	YC
	Christ Is the World's Light	AYC
Shaw/Parker	This Joyful Eastertide	A
	With a Voice of Singing	Y
	Wondrous Love	YC
Shepherd	As Tenderly as a Father	C
Simon (arr. Johnson)	Let the River Run	(High School 2016) Y
Sleeth	Blessing	C
	Everywhere I Go	C
	Go Now In Peace (from Sunday Songbook)	C
	Hallelujah, Glory Hallelujah	C
	Light One Candle	C
	Promised Land	C
	We Had a Share	C
Smart	Praise to the Lord	C
Tallis	Tallis Canon	C

Thompson	Alleluia	A
Tindley/Baker	The Storm is Passing Over	A
Tucker	I Believe in the Sun	YC
	With Mind and Spirit	C
Tye	Laudate Nomen Domini (arr. Hopson)	A
Vghn Wms	Come Down, O Love Divine	AYC
Vivaldi	Laudamus Te (Gloria)	YC
	Sing to the Lord	A
Wagner	The Earth is the Lord's	C
Walker	How Can I Keep from Singing	A
(Dir. '85)	A Round of Praise	C
	Sing Joy (w/ cong.)	A
	Three Wise Kings	C
Wilberg	Anthem of Peace	AYC
	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling	AYC
Williams	Dear Heavenly Father	C
Williamson	The King of Love	YC
Wood	Thanks We Give	YC
Ylvisaker	Borning Cry	AYC
Ziegenhals	You Shall Have A Song	C
Zingarelli	Go Not Far From Me, O God	Y

APPENDIX B

MYSTIC AREA ECUMENICAL CHOIR FESTIVAL: BRIEF HISTORY

A Brief History of Ecumenical Musical Endeavors Among the Mystic Area Churches

In the mid-1960s a group known as MAMA (Mystic Area Ministers Association) was responsible for initiating an all-cooperative work between our area churches. At the instigation of Jim Pratt, called to the Noank Baptist Church in late 1963, MAMA agreed to support the formation of a Mystic Area Chorus. This somewhat informal group, at first organized by Jim, later under the guidance of the Mystic Area Choir Directors, presented the following works under the sponsorship of MAMA:

1965 – Messiah (Part I) – Handel	Fenno Heath, Director
1966 – Requiem – Brahmas	James Armstrong, Director
1967 – Messiah (Part I) – Handel	Margaret Brooks, Director
1968 – Messiah (Parts II and III) – Handel	Donald Janse, Director
1968 – Mystic Children's Choir Festival	Local Directors
1969 – Requiem – Fauré	Barbara Kane, Director
1969 – Mystic Junior Choirs	Local Directors
1970 – Crucifixion – Stainer	Walter Edmonds, Director

In 1970-71, MAMA merged with MILC (the Mystic Interfaith Laymen's Council) to form MAEC (the Mystic Area Ecumenical Council). From that point MAEC sponsored annual choir festivals and other musical events utilizing distinguished choral directors and composers from outside our area. Jim Pratt served as General Chairperson of the events until 1993. Jane Schmidt served as the Chairperson from 1994 to 2009. These festivals and other events sponsored by MAEC are as follows:

1971 – Seven Last Words – Dubois	Barbara Kane, Director
1972 – Choir Festival	Robert Newton, Director
1973 – Choir Festival	Donald Lang, Director
1974 – Choir Festival	Donald Lang, Director
1975 – Choir Festival	George Kent, Director
1976 – Choir Festival	Donald Lang, Director
1977 – Choir Festival	Connie Dutton, Director
1978 – Choir Festival	Roberta Bitgood, Director
1979 – Choir Festival	Helen Kemp, Director
1980 – Choir Festival	Donald Lang, Director
1980 – Messiah (Parts II and III) – Handel	Local Directors
1981 – Choir Festival	Philip Dietterich, Director
1982 – Choir Festival	Joanne and Jack Rodland, Directors

1983 – Choir Festival	Helen Kemp, Director
1984 – Choir Festival	Philip Dietterich, Director
1985 – Choir Festival	Douglas Wagner, Director
1986 – Choir Festival	Hal Hopson, Director
1987 – Choir Festival	Philip Dietterich, Director
1988 – Choir Festival	James Litton, Director
1988 – Russian Orthodox Festival	Stephen Schnur & Michael Roshak
1988 – Yale Russian Chorus	
1989 – Requiem - Fauré	Michele Holt, Director
1990 – Choir Festival	James Litton, Director
1991 – Choir Festival	Hal Hopson, Director
1992 – Choir Festival	Sue Ellen Page, Director
1993 – Choir Festival	Michael Jothan, Director
1994 – Choir Festival	John Horman, Director
1994 – Messiah (Part I) – Handel	Joan Steadman, Director
1995 – Choir Festival	Allen Pote, Director
1996 – Choir Festival	Michael and Janice Kemp, Directors
1997 – Choir Festival	Gerre Hancock, Director
1998 – Choir Festival	Sue Ellen Page, Director
1999 – Choir Festival	Philip Dietterich, Director
Festival service dedicated to Rev. Newell Bishop	
2000 – Choir Festival	Hal and Martha Hopson, Director
Festival service dedicated to Rev. James L. Pratt	
2001 – Choir Festival	John Horman, Director
2002 – Choir Festival	Betty Bedsole, Director
2003 – Choir Festival	Lee Gwozdz, Director
2004 – Choir Festival	Michael and Janice Kemp, Directors
Festival service dedicated to Dr. Roberta Bitgood	
2005 – Choir Festival	Lynnel Joy Jenkins, Director
2006 – Choir Festival	C. Michael Hawn, Director
2007 – Choir Festival	Tom Kendzia, Director
2008 – Choir Festival	Lynnel Joy Jenkins, Director
2009 – Choir Festival	Michael Bedford, Director
Festival service dedicated to Jane Schmidt	
2010 – Choir Festival	Dr. Jamie Spillane, Director
2011 – Choir Festival	Rev. Walter Edmonds, Director
2012 – Choir Festival	Sally K. Albrecht, Director
2013 – Choir Festival	Greg Gilpin, Director
2014 – Choir Festival	Mark Patterson, Director
2015 – Choir Festival	Victor C. Johnson, Director
2016 – Choir Festival	Dr. Jamie Spillane, Director
2017 – Choir Festival	Mark Daniel Merritt, Director

APPENDIX C
PROGRAM FOR DISSERTATION RECITAL ONE



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

presents

MARK DANIEL MERRITT, *conductor*

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

**Thursday December 1, 2016
6:00 PM • Recital Hall**

**Graduate Vocal Ensemble
with
Chamber Orchestra**

**Joe Setzer, *organ*
Yanni Chan, *piano***

Gloria RV 589

Antonio Vivaldi
(1678–1741)

Missa brevis Sancti Joannis de Deo
("Little Organ Mass")

Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)

Kyrie
Gloria
Credo
Sanctus
Benedictus
Agnus Dei

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come

Paul Manz
(1919–2009)

Christmas In About Three Minutes

arr. Mark Weston
(b. 1953)

*Mr. Merritt is a student of Dr. Larry Wyatt.
This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting.*

APPENDIX D
PROGRAM FOR DISSERTATION RECITAL TWO

University of South Carolina
School of Music

presents

MARK DANIEL MERRITT, conductor

in

DOCTORAL RECITAL

**Thursday March 28, 2017
3:45 PM • Room 006**

University Chorus

Stephanie Bova, piano

Ave Verum Corpus

William Byrd
(1543–1623)

Requiem

Maurice Duruflé
1902-1986)


Shakespeare Songs

O Mistress Mine
When Daffodils Begin to Peer
It was a Lover and His Lass

Matthew Harris
(b. 1956)

Mr. Merritt is a student of Dr. Larry Wyatt. This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting.

APPENDIX E
PROGRAM FOR DISSERTATION RECITAL THREE



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

Summer Chorus II
Larry Wyatt and Mark Daniel Merritt, conductors
Jerry D. Olson, Jr., piano

Presents

Theresienmesse
Franz Joseph Haydn

Serena Hill-LaRoche, soprano
Kelsey Harrison, mezzo-soprano
Walter Cuttino, tenor
Jacob Will, bass

and

Song of Democracy
Howard Hanson

Friday, July 21, 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, July 23, 2017, 4:00 p.m.

USC School of Music, Recital Hall

The performance conducted by Mark Daniel Merritt is in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting.

APPENDIX F

PROGRAM FOR LECTURE RECITAL



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
School of Music

presents

MARK DANIEL MERRITT, conductor

in

DOCTORAL LECTURE RECITAL

*The Tie that Binds: the history, conductors, & music of the
Mystic Area Ecumenical Choir Festival*

with

Graduate Vocal Ensemble

Caryn Ong, piano

William Douglas, organ

Noa Miller & Daniel Rhu, trumpets

Michael Baker & Chris Geiger, trombones

Clay Nelson, narrator

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

6:00 PM • Recital Hall

All God's Children	Sally Albrecht (b. 1954)
Rejoice, Ye Shining Worlds on High	William Billings (1746–1800)
Cantique de Jean Racine	Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)
Deo Gratias	Mark Daniel Merritt (b. 1961)
The Church's One Foundation	Mark Daniel Merritt (b. 1961)
I'm Gonna Sing and Shout	Mary McDonald (b. 1956)
O Praise Ye The Lord	Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918) arr. Hal Hopson (b. 1933)

*Mr. Merritt is a student of Dr. Larry Wyatt & Dr. Alicia Walker.
This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Music Arts degree in Choral Conducting.*