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Chorus America's 2021 Awards Recognize Outstanding Chorus and Individuals

Chorus America has announced the recipients of its 2021 awards program, recognizing a broad range of achievements in choral music and service to the choral field. The awards program celebrates and fosters meaningful contributions from remarkable individuals and choruses.

"Chorus America is delighted to recognize the accomplishments of these incredible award winners," said Chorus America president and CEO Catherine Dehoney. "Their artistry, their dedication, and the joy they bring to their work lift up the entire field and inspire us all."

The awards will be presented during a virtual Awards Celebration on Tuesday, June 15 at 7:00 pm EDT, before Chorus America's Summer Conference on June 16-18.

Chorus America Distinguished Service Award

The Chorus America Distinguished Service Award recognizes a member whose long-term service to the choral field significantly furthers Chorus America's mission "to empower singing ensembles to create vibrant communities and effect meaningful change."

Kathy Saltzman Romey is the 2021 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award. Romey's career spans the preparation of high-level professional ensembles, university teaching, and mentorship of countless young conductors, educators, composers, and singers. As the artistic director for the Minnesota Chorale, Romey has reimagined the role of the symphony chorus from a purely artistic venture to a group which provides opportunities for youth and forges deep community connections. Under her leadership, the Chorale began two youth choirs in the Minneapolis Public School system and annual Bridges Project concerts that bring together ensembles, schools, and communities to celebrate diverse repertoire and raise awareness of social issues. Romey has been on the staff of the Oregon Bach Festival since 1984 and is principal chorus master of the Festival's 54-voice professional choir. She has prepared ensembles for conductors across the globe with a meticulous and musical approach that has been recognized with both a Grammy award and an additional nomination. Beyond her performance activities, Romey serves as the director of choral activities at the University of Minnesota, where she has built a nationally acclaimed graduate program in choral conducting.

Michael Korn Founders Award for Development of the Professional Choral Art

Named after one of the founders of Chorus America, this award was established in 1978 to honor an individual with a lifetime of significant contributions to the professional choral art.

Harry Christophers is the 2021 recipient of the Korn Founders Award for his extraordinary career, vibrant leadership, and distinguished body of work in Renaissance, Baroque, and 20th- and 21st-century music. Christophers is the artistic director of Boston's Handel and Haydn Society (H+H), the oldest continually performing arts organization in the United States. He will step down as artistic director at the end of the 2021–22 Season, concluding an exceptional 14-year tenure. During his time at H+H, Christophers has taken the period-instrument Orchestra and Chorus to new heights, enhancing H+H's international reputation while extending its reach through education and community programming in Boston and beyond. He has also brought the organization back to its roots as a choral society, putting greater focus on the Chorus in live performances and encouraging singers to step forward as soloists. Christophers also serves as conductor of the renowned British professional choir and ensemble, The Sixteen, which he founded in 1979.

Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal

The Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal was established in memory of Louis Botto for his artistry, selfless service to the choral art, and entrepreneurial spirit in founding the men's vocal ensemble Chanticleer. The award is given periodically to a mid-career choral leader who, through their work with a member ensemble of Chorus America, has demonstrated innovative action and entrepreneurial zeal in developing a professional or professional-core choral ensemble.

Alexander Lloyd Blake is the 2021 recipient of the Botto Award. With his Los Angeles ensemble Tonicity, Blake is forging a new paradigm for professional choral music. From Tonicity's 2016 founding, Blake imagined it as an ensemble that would represent the diverse cultures and ethnicities within the Los Angeles area. His mission has evolved to using artistry and the power of united voices to catalyze social change. Tonicity's concerts focus on social justice themes, including gun violence, homelessness, and climate change, and feature dynamic programming that has received a Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. Through partnerships with organizations addressing the issues explored, concerts also motivate audiences to take action. Blake's entrepreneurial vision extends beyond his own ensemble to support causes that have local and global impact.

Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award

The Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award honors the life and achievements of educator, conductor, and arranger Brazeal Dennard by recognizing individuals or organizations whose work builds upon his commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and furthering African American and other diverse choral traditions through performance, research, or the creation of new compositions of significance.

The 2021 Brazeal Wayne Dennard Award goes to **André de Quadros** for a lifelong commitment to inclusion through teaching, scholarship, advocacy, and artistry. Through his work on faculty in the Department of Music Education at Boston University and beyond, de Quadros celebrates diverse choral traditions from around the globe and expands the definitions of choral practice to include the voices of those on the margins. As an author and editor, he has published nearly 50 editions of choral music from the Muslim world, Asia, and the Pacific. As a choral practitioner, he is developing new cross-cultural

experimental repertoire with influences of Arab, Indian, Latin American, and Indonesian music and crisscrosses the globe to work with his ensembles. These programs include an arts program for incarcerated individuals at prisons outside of Boston, and community music projects that foster connection and healing in areas like Jerusalem and the border between the United States and Mexico. De Quadros is also a co-founder of The Choral Commons, a media platform that provides a space for singing communities to realize the liberatory potential of the ensemble.

Dale Warland Singers Commission Award

Chorus America and the American Composers Forum partner to present this award in honor of Dale Warland's lifelong commitment to new music as embodied through his work with the Dale Warland Singers. The award is made possible by the Dale Warland Singers Fund for New Choral Music, a permanently restricted endowment fund established in 2004. The winning chorus receives a cash award of \$10,000, \$7,500 of which supports the commissioning fee and \$2,500 of which supports engagement with the project composer, and production and promotion costs to present the project.

Chicago Children's Choir (CCC), led by president and artistic director **Josephine Lee**, is the 2021 recipient of the Dale Warland Singers Commission Award. CCC will work with composer-in-residence, local Chicagoan, and CCC alumnus **W. Mitchell Owens, III** as composer of the score for *Rainbow Beach*, a new piece of music theatre spotlighting Chicago's civil rights history. Inspired by true events, *Rainbow Beach* recounts the historic 1961 "wade-ins" on the South Side of Chicago that led to the desegregation of Chicago beaches—a significant moment in the country's civil rights movement. CCC plans to present *Rainbow Beach* as a fully mounted production, with accompanying programming and curriculum that will deepen connections between the diverse communities of Chicago and inspire national conversation on how our country engages youth in discussions of social justice and equality.

Awards Program Adjustments for 2021

With significant changes to performance and operations because of COVID-19, Chorus America adjusted its Awards Program for 2021. Some awards with criteria that are difficult to adjudicate under current circumstances are on hold for the 2021 Awards cycle, with plans to resume in 2022. Learn more at chorusamerica.org/awards.

Chorus America is the advocacy, research, and leadership development organization that advances the choral field. We support and serve choral conductors, administrators, board members, and singers with tools, training, peer networking, and access so that choruses are better able to contribute to their communities.

More than 1,500 choruses, individuals, businesses, and organizations are members of Chorus America and have access to a wide array of programs, publications, research, and personal services developed for their benefit. These services strengthen their ability to build strong organizations that foster quality choral performances.

Chorus America is governed by a diverse board of accomplished arts leaders from across North America, and the executive staff is headquartered in Washington DC. Learn more at www.chorusamerica.org.

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