



WELCOME TO THE SUMMER 2017 MELODIOUS ACCORD E-NEWSLETTER!

*This print version was adapted from the e-newsletter distributed on July 30, 2017.*

#### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

***Melodious Accord believes that melody is an unparalleled means of communication for human beings; that when we use our ears and voices we enrich our lives through creating communities of sound; and that singing together brings immediate benefits - physical, mental and spiritual - to those who join in this most participatory of all the arts.***

#### THE VIEW FROM HERE



#### ... IS SUMMER!

As welcome as it is long-awaited, the sun has finally conquered mist, rain, snow (yes, on May 17th), hail, fog and every kind of dank moisture known to mankind. It must have shone sometime in May, but I don't remember it. There was one cold, clammy day after another. I know not to plant anything outside until Memorial Day weekend, but this year took the cake for winter clothes needed until June.

So we've been working overtime to plant the garden (mostly herbs), put the lawn in order (get ahead of the moisture-loving ferns and moss), and encourage the tiny blue-eyed Marys and the wild strawberries that spring up each year. I had six yellow tulips along with daffodils and a couple of hyacinths to assuage my longing for color. And now there are deep blue iris and a new small white fragrant rose bush. And we've had three sunny days in a row!

Because of the rain, the trees and fields are lush with greenery. My view is almost completely enclosed by laden trees -- but in compensation, I get the dappled shadows cast by sunlight through leaves. I see the wind moving from the treetops down to the meadow grasses, and hear the birds singing from early dawn to late twilight. I'd forgotten how long these June days are, and how beautiful.

I see a red-tailed hawk keeping an eye out for the tiny birds-nests in the shrubs. I notice large paw-prints on the screen door: a bear, who'd wandered by in search of food. There are tiny deer following their mothers -- and a magical transparently-red newt, looking like a survivor from the dinosaur age. There are trout in the stream (which has been roaring), and bugs galore, with this being an especially busy year for ticks and black flies. Oh, well -- every season has its disadvantages.

In closing, I can't do better than to quote Emily Dickinson:

***What shall I do when the Summer troubles --  
What, when the rose is ripe . . .  
. . . when the Skies a'chirrup  
Drop a Tune on Me? . . .***

What shall I do? Why, sing, of course.

-- Alice Parker

## MEET THE BOARD

Mezzo soprano Jacqueline Pierce has appeared as soloist with numerous opera companies, symphonies, and choral organizations, including the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic, and the Berkshire Choral Institute. She was the mezzo soloist with the Holy Trinity Bach Choir of New York City for 23 years and with BachWorks, of which she was also a founder and board member. She has recorded with RCA, CRI Angel and New World records.

Jacquie is also contractor for a number of professional choral ensembles in New York City, including the New York Choral Artists (the professional chorus of the New York Philharmonic), the Concert Chorale of New York, for which she serves as artistic director, and for Melodious Accord.

Jacquie has served on the chorus panel and special projects panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, and on the boards of Chorus America and the American Guild of Musical Artists. She currently serves on the boards of Melodious Accord and Elizabeth R & Company, for which she also serves as music director. In addition, she maintains a private studio of voice students. She has a home on Roanoke Island in North Carolina where she spends as much of the summer as possible.

*Jacquie has been the choral contractor for Melodious Accord since 1990, auditioning and forming our singers and soloists for concerts and recordings. I love her rich mezzo-soprano voice, and her generous, sensible spirit has enriched our board, along with her extensive trade knowledge and her advocacy for the singers she represents.* -- Alice Parker



## BOARD NOTES

Alice's constant creativity continues to amaze and delight us. At our board meetings the most fun we have, and the part we wait eagerly for, is the singing at the end. Alice brings a hymn from her wonderful Melodious Accord Hymnal (featured in this issue's Shop Window) or something else she's currently working on, gives us a brief "incipit" to show us how she

wants it to sound, and then we're off. Because her conception of each piece is so precise, she usually has a brief corrective for us before stanza 2, and then we're off again. There's always a pleasant surprise at the robust sound we make. Discussing the business of the organization is one thing, but singing brings out the best in us.

The wonderful project of collecting ninety online performances in honor of Alice's ninetieth birthday yielded more results than we'd imagined. Board member Paul Vasile created this project, a tremendous success. You can listen to some of these performances by college choirs, professional choirs, church choirs, and community choirs by going to the Melodious Accord website.

Alice is always surrounded by adoring admirers at choral events and the American Choral Directors Convention in Minneapolis in March was no exception. She appeared at the presentation of the magnificent new documentary Robert Shaw: Man of Many Voices, giving a Q&A afterwards. This yielded wonderful stories from Alice, as well as new insights, while the audience listened in rapt attention and with bated breath.

This is the last "From the Chairs" column from us, Marilyn and Bill. We will step down as chairs after the September board meeting in New York, when new officers will be elected. Marilyn will soon begin as the President of the Hymn Society in the U.S. and Canada, a huge honor and responsibility to be sure, and will not be able to continue on the board. Bill is vacating the chair, but still available to continue as a board member, supporting the new officers in whatever way he's needed and enjoying the wonderful camaraderie of friends on the board. We have loved serving as co-chairs of Melodious Accord for the past four years and look forward to its new recording and educational projects.

We join our readers and members of the board in celebrating our marvelous, common vocation: creating communities of song.

-- Bill Roberts and Marilyn Haskel, co-chairs

## SHOP WINDOW



## THE MELODIOUS ACCORD HYMNAL

Are you looking for new hymns about peace for your church? New responses and short anthems? Would you like to hear your congregation sing Hark, I hear the harps eternal? Or the sturdy spiritual Ride on, King Jesus? The Melodious Accord Hymnal, compiled and edited by Alice Parker, has 150 hymns in new settings which are designed to be sung by adventurous choirs and congregations. It is also a source book for melody and style studies, with copious indices and notes. Order copies for your own study or for your choir, and enjoy many hours of exploration and pleasure.

Visit the Melodious Accord Store online at <http://store.melodiousaccord.org> to order the Hymnal and see all the recordings and publications that are available.

## EDITORIAL

### VOICE TO EAR: EAR TO VOICE

How do we first learn to sing? Not through voice lessons, or being able to read music, or by possessing some kind of magical instrument. It's much more basic than that: we come fully equipped at birth.

A baby is born knowing about sound. It can hear, and make astonishingly loud noises, immediately after birth. No one gives it voice lessons -- the breathing is totally relaxed, and is so efficient that the babe can cry for hours without tiring its voice. It started hearing early in its mother's womb, and soon recognizes familiar voices. Some babies can remember pitches remarkably early: I remember being startled at the sound of the car horn coming from the infant seat behind me, before I'd even touched the instrument itself. They learn songs as easily as they are sung to them, and sing them back in little dribs and drabs that gradually cohere into a whole. Song is play: it predates speech, which takes years to learn.

Yet when the child is old enough for school, we teach songs by the page, insisting on accuracy to the printed symbol. We teach all the visual facts: quarter notes, measure lines, meters and counting, scales -- anything but the song itself. That is of course an exaggeration, but not as much as you might suppose, because we have been wedded to the printed page for so long that we've forgotten how it limits the music itself. The song that leaps from the mouth of the folksinger has become harnessed to the wagon of print: pitches confined to what can be played on the piano, counts to what can be written in an inefficient system, and words so squeezed into quarter notes that they lose all their natural flow. What we hear from our school choruses and church choirs, over and over, is "correct to the page": interpreting all the markings literally (and judged on this fidelity), while the soul of the song is far away.

And what is the "soul of the song?" It's the lilt that catches the heart of the listener, the lift that makes the feet dance, the emotion that calls forth an immediate response in the listener. The traversal over the ups and downs of melody can call forth a long-buried memory, or bring an absent lover near. Why do we sing? To transmit these emotions, of course, and to share rich memories of people and places and events that have molded us. Notating this kind of singing is impossible. I can't notate the way I speak: it's much too complicated in both pitch and rhythm, in tempo, phrasing and tone-of-voice. When we hear the real thing, from a choir or a singer or a child, we recognize it instantly, and exult in it. We think that it is the result of years of practice -- and it may be -- but it more often is the result of people growing up where songs are sung out of love, and simply imitating them . . . just the way the baby learns its first songs. We go 'way around Robin Hood's barn' (where did that expression come from?) to arrive right next to where we started. Voice to ear: ear to voice; that is the way we are designed to learn music. The page is an impediment, a foreign object.

I'm well aware that I earn my living by the page, and depend on it to transmit my musical ideas to those far away in space and time. But if the reader doesn't realize the abysmal insufficiency of the page, he is caught in the swamp of confusing symbol with sound. He must bring to the page -- every time -- the fluency of the dancer, the intoxicating beat of the drummer, the heartfelt sigh of the lover, the bodily lunge of the workman, the drowning sorrow of the bereaved. Music is not notes. Notes are a horrendous limitation, a diminishing, of the power of song. I can make any song sound God-awful by singing just what is on the page -- (or by listening to what the computer spits back at me.) I believe that my page shows just five percent of what is needed -- the music is up to us, with ears and mouths wide open.

-- Alice Parker



**ALICE SINGS TO HER GREAT-GRANDDAUGHTER**

## WHAT'S NEW

### A NEW PUBLICATION

**RABBI, WEAVE YOUR NET OF WORDS** (Selah 410-694) – SATB, with keyboard - 2:24

Setting a lovely, imaginative text by Richard Leach, the music casts a spell, entwining words and melodies in a simple, evocative anthem.

### AND SEVERAL RE-PUBLICATIONS

Alice is pleased to note the republication of seven octavos which had long been out of print. Hal Leonard has released them under the Mark Foster imprint. There are five Spirituals, a Christmas carol and a patriotic anthem.

**BALM IN GILEAD** (# 00200508) - SATBB, with mezzo or baritone solo - 6:00

- Slow and tender

**BY AN' BY** (# 00200904) - SATB, with soprano solo - 2:30

- Light and lively

**KEEP YOUR HAND ON THAT PLOW** (#00200510) - SATB, with baritone solo - 3:25

- Firm, accented

**TELL 'EM I'M GONE** (# 00200948) - SATB, with alto solo - 3:55

- A heavy Blues lament

**YOU CAN TELL THE WORLD** (# 00200950) - SATB div. - 3:28

- Delightful, joyful Swing

**JOY TO THE WORLD** (# 00200949) - SATB, trumpet, organ and congregation - 3:00

- A cheerful baroque concertino setting of the familiar carol, with added Isaac Watts verses and full congregational participation.

**OUR NATIVE LAND** (# 00200509) - SATB with piano or optional full orchestra - 5:30

- Based on early American sources, this lively anthem includes a fife tune, a patriotic student song, an Appalachian hymn tune and the Washington Crossing the Delaware March. A history lesson in song!

## MELODIOUS ACCORD FELLOWS PROGRAMS

### SEMINARS

The new Seminars are in full swing! Currently scheduled groups, meeting at Alice's home in Massachusetts, are Melody Studies in August, Composers in September, and another Melody Studies in October. These groups are filled, but Alice will be planning next year's Seminars in the coming months. Please get in touch if you wish to set up a group: let us know what you want to focus on, and what dates might suit you. We will take it from there, gathering together people with similar interests and schedules. Choose between Melody Studies, Song Leading, and Composers.

For more information, or to arrange a seminar, email Kay Holt at [kay@melodiousaccord.org](mailto:kay@melodiousaccord.org), or call 413-536-1753.

## REPORT - SONG LEADING SEMINAR

The first seminar in Song Leading was held in Philadelphia in May. Three graduate students, one graduate, and one faculty member from Temple University joined in singing and leading folk melodies, finding that this approach shone a welcome new light on their studies.



PARTICIPANTS IN THE SONG LEADING SEMINAR IN MAY

## CORRESPONDENCE

### FROM OUR READERS:

**After a performance of Sermon from the Mountain: Martin Luther King:** “My mother grew up in Atlanta and my father attended college with Dr. King. . . The performance was a highlight of 2016 for me. The score is phenomenal! The combination of the quotes, soloists, orchestra and choir come together masterfully. Each movement captures the appropriate spirit and sound. . . For example: “Let justice roll” . . . the choir and orchestra sound like rolling water. “I want to live” . . . captures the sounds and beliefs of the civil rights marches of the 60’s. “My feet is tired” . . . captures the sentiment of the women during the bus boycott and their religious conviction.” - Andrea Ross, soprano in the Chicago Community Chorus

**On hearing the interview with Krista Tippett:** “Thank you for articulating so beautifully what music and singing mean and can do. In the midst of all the uncertainty in the world, I am increasingly convinced that song is, as you say, a companionable art, that in small or big ways can impact and change communities. I sing in a chorus, and I know that for me all the stresses and worries of the week become dimmed when I’m focused on breath and hitting beautiful notes and harmonies. . . All of this is to say I am so grateful to you for your spirit and being a champion of the voice and the power of song. . .” - Amanda Lorencz, Brooklyn, NY

*Note: If you missed this interview, it is archived on Krista Tippett's On Being website: <https://onbeing.org/programs/alice-parker-singing-is-the-most-companionable-of-arts/>.*

**After attending a home-town funeral:** “When the minister suggested that everyone sing The Old Rugged Cross, the musical snob in me came rushing in. But the most moving thing happened. The crowd sang so forcefully . . . it rang out all over the cemetery. I guess they are so used to singing a cappella that they really thrive on it. . . I can’t quite describe what happened, but this old critical heart of mine hid in shame, because I had participated in a real coming together of hearts and souls. . . What was apparent was the love and memories that seemed to flood their hearts and the surrounding area.” - B. B. Dallas TX

## NOTES ON TEACHING:

**Arranging and Composing:** I have to cover a lot of "tools" in this two week class - but finding a text's music is the hardest for [my students]. They want to leap to music right away before knowing and listening to the text. It's the hardest part of the class, I think. . . The other thing we do a lot of is singing - they can feel the challenges and successes with their throats and not by the page! - David Cherwien

**Leading a SING:** No accompaniment! Make them have to sing. Line out the tempo, mood, articulation before they start, otherwise you get too many versions of the tune at the same time. Get just the unison melody sounding wonderful -- that's 100%: counterpoint and harmony are extra. Establish a mood, and stick to it. When you and your singers have 'become the song', you've reached your goal. – Alice Parker

**Composing and Improvising:** There's a huge difference between the results of improvisation, and the results of composing. I find it difficult to listen to tapes of my SINGS because I am used to hearing more organized, focused sound on a recording. And the exhilaration of 'making it up as we go along' doesn't seem to make it onto the tape at all. . . . Choral improvising is for me a gathering place of ideas -- good, bad and indifferent -- all held together by a persuasive singing of the basic tune. Composing for me starts there, but then depends on the winnowing out of ideas, the careful choice of what will be heard, monitoring the addition of new ideas. – Alice Parker

## PLEASE SEND PROGRAMS!

We actively collect programs from performances of Alice's work, so if you are presenting an Alice Parker arrangement or composition, please put a program in the mail to us at our New York address (see below) – or scan it and send via email to [kay@melodiousaccord.org](mailto:kay@melodiousaccord.org).

Why do we do this? It's not just a feel-good exercise on our part (though we do love to hear about all these performances). The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) pays royalties to composers based on performances of their work each year. ASCAP monitors concerts at major venues, but many performances of Alice's works take place at churches, schools, colleges, and concert halls that are not monitored; thus, the only way that Alice can get credit for those performances is if we send ASCAP the programs.

A printed program is best, but if that's not available, please send us written notification, including the following details on the performance:

- Date of the performance
- Venue (concert hall, place of worship, auditorium, etc.), City and State
- Name of performing group
- Title(s) of the piece(s) performed

## THOUGHTS? QUESTIONS? WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Let us know how Alice's work has influenced you. Send a question, or suggest a topic you'd like Alice to address in her editorial. And let us know if you are searching for copies of Alice's music; we'll be glad to hunt them down for you.

## HELP SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS

We welcome your interest and your support. Melodious Accord, Inc. is incorporated in the State of New York as a non-profit organization under IRS code 501(c)(3). Contributions are deductible to the full extent of the law.

Remember that your contributions are always appreciated and put to good use at Melodious Accord. For the long term, gifts of stocks or bonds are welcome.

If you wish to make a contribution, you may do so through PayPal by clicking the Donate button below, or mail it to:

Melodious Accord, Inc.  
P. O. Box 20801  
Park West Station  
New York, NY 10025-1516

## CALENDAR

### FOLLOW ALICE PARKER ON THE MOVE

For information about any of these events, write to [kay@melodiousaccord.org](mailto:kay@melodiousaccord.org), or call 413-536-1753.

#### **2017**

July	5	Frederick Douglas Celebration, Spirituals	Charlemont, MA
	16	MA CDA – Summer SING	Northampton, MA
	17-19	CO CDA – Summer Workshop/SING	Greenwood Village, CO
	31-8/2	MA SEMINAR II – Melody Studies	Hawley, MA
Aug	5	Great American Songbook recital with Tinky Weisblat	Charlemont, MA
	15	Roomful of Teeth – Workshop	Williamstown, MA
Sept	11	AGO Meeting – SING	Boston, MA
	16	Melodious Accord Board Meeting	New York, NY
	23	Singers Glen Opera Performance	Singers Glen, VA
	27-29	MA SEMINAR III – Composers	Hawley, MA
Oct	10-12	MA SEMINAR IV – Melody Studies	Hawley, MA
	19	SING and Lecture with Andrew Clark	Latrobe, PA
	22	Christ Lutheran Church, Service and SING	Natick, MA
Nov	14-15	Senior College – SING	Brunswick, ME
Dec	9	Carnegie Hall – Music Educators Workshop	New York, NY

#### **2018**

Jan	13	Melodious Accord Board Meeting	New York, NY
	14	Cathedral of St John the Divine - SING	New York, NY
	15-17	Melodious Accord Score Study Workshop	New York, NY



## CONTENTS

Welcome to the Summer 2017 Melodious Accord E-Newsletter! .....	1
Statement of Purpose .....	1
The View from Here .....	1
. . . is SUMMER! .....	1
Meet the Board .....	2
Board Notes .....	2
Shop Window .....	3
The Melodious Accord Hymnal .....	3
Editorial .....	4
Voice to Ear: Ear to Voice .....	4
What's New .....	5
A New Publication .....	5
And Several Re-publications .....	5
Melodious Accord Fellows Programs .....	5
Seminars .....	5
Report - Song Leading Seminar .....	6
Correspondence .....	6
From Our Readers: .....	6
Notes on Teaching: .....	7
Please Send Programs! .....	7
Thoughts? Questions? We would love to hear from you! .....	7
Help Support Our Programs .....	8
Calendar .....	8
Follow Alice Parker on the Move .....	8