



WELCOME TO THE FALL 2016 MELODIOUS ACCORD E-NEWSLETTER!

This print version was adapted from the e-newsletter distributed on December 13, 2016.

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



FALLING INTO FALL

This autumn has been unexpectedly lovely. We had had such a succession of ideal summer days that we were worried about the lack of rain. In other years, such drought has resulted in leaves that turned brown on the trees, and dropped with a minimum of color. But this year somehow the hills were covered in varicolored leaves, and we enjoyed all the autumnal bounty -- apples, pumpkins, root vegetables – in huge quantities. The lack of ground water has only showed up in some communities as the fall progresses. We are hoping for a good snowfall this winter, to raise the levels and please the skiers.

My daily walks disclosed new vistas every day, as the leaves began to accumulate on fields and roads. I could catch a glimpse of the brook that I hadn't seen since early spring, newly unmasked by bare branches. The tree skeletons began to allow the farther hills to be seen, with their blue tracings against the sky. The earliest frosts led to misty mornings, where the ground was covered by a white cloud while all above was clear. The reflected light inside the house, bright orange-yellow in October, became daily more subdued as the days shortened – more clean and severe. Now the sun hits my kitchen at 9am, and hides behind the hill at about 3. It's totally dark by 5 – time to light the wood stove and enjoy a cup of tea.

I find myself wanting to set my schedule by the sun, working hard from 9 to 3, and then enjoying nature's long night-time of rest and renewal. That's moving back into a world before electricity and all its modern gadgets. It's much easier to live simply without the media. That choice is almost impossible any more, but moves in that direction are rewarding to any human willing to attempt it. I recommend it highly, as an antidote to the mountains of factual data submerging us each day. "Unplug!" could be the watchword to both peace of mind and the enjoyment of the seasons.

-- Alice Parker

CALLING ALL CHOIRS!



What's better than 90 candles on your cake? 90 (or more) choirs from around the world singing your music and sharing it online! Join Melodious Accord as we celebrate Alice's upcoming significant birthday with a unique, online birthday celebration: [#AliceIs90](#). Amateur and professional ensembles of all ages and sizes are welcome.

[Visit the new page on our website to learn more and to register your choir.](#)

BOARD NOTES

Autumn is in full swing where most of our supporters live, and Melodious Accord is off and running in the 2016-17 season.

Alice's energy and creativity continue to amaze us. At Board meetings she passes out her "curtailed" schedule, which strikes us trustees as the busy schedule of a supremely active person, which she is. We are all grateful that she continues to enjoy composing, arranging, conducting and speaking, all things that she's done for decades and at which she continues to excel.

Board member Paul Vasile began an initiative to collect *ninety* (!) YouTube performances of Parker works in honor of Alice's ninetieth birthday. At last count there were eighty seven performances posted, leaving us with only three remaining. We're certain we can reach Paul's ambitious goal.

October saw the second and concluding session of ***Raising the Song: Creating Communities that Sing***. Alice was joined by Marilyn Haskel (Melodious Accord co-chair and founding member of Music that Makes Community) and Ysaye Barnwell (a founder and member for over thirty years of the African American singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock). The three leaders worked with twelve selected participants who developed skills for leading informal song. They learned how to enliven song with a crowd of varying music backgrounds, using only their voice, teaching ability, and powers of persuasion.

The participants came from all over the U.S.--from California to Maine--plus one person from Liberia, who is in the U.S. for graduate study. Needless to say, these young adults were in awe of the opportunity to study with Alice and her colleagues, who worked them hard, gave them honest feedback, and sent them on their way, fired up to lead community sings.

As they left last year's symposium, each participant was charged with beginning a new project that employed their newly-acquired skills. Returning in October 2016, they were expected to report back to their peers and teachers, detailing their experiences in these start-up ventures. Participants worked in a wide range of settings. One person worked with kindergartners, one with people with dementia, one with teachers in a public school setting, one in a college level setting, one in a small community setting, and several in church settings. Each participant reported enthusiastically on the responses to their new leadership skills. Participants were also asked to consider teaching someone else what they learned at Raising the Song.

Here are some student comments from the evaluations, demonstrating the enthusiastic response to the symposium. A participant from Virginia remarked, "The presenters were excellent in giving me workable suggestions that I could follow as well as positive reinforcement for what I was already strong in. Because of their vast experience they had practical help from their different backgrounds. They each have diverse backgrounds (from formal to global music) so we got a well-rounded presentation of how to help spread music to others."

A young man from Texas described the symposium, "It seems the most difficult part about being a 'song prophet,' if you will, is getting over your own insecurity. The most profound thing for me was the variety of perspective that each clinician brought."

Marilyn Haskel added, "As one of the presenters, I found this work with such bright and creative students incredibly rewarding and hopeful. Their enthusiasm for this work was contagious, and they were receptive and questioning. It became clear as we drew to a close this year that training people how to lead informal singing is vital, and the time afforded in this heroic effort needs to be expanded. We can no longer take for granted that people sing together easily and naturally without a skillful leader. Teaching people to sing again, while creating an open and encouraging informal atmosphere, is a talent that requires a clear philosophy and set of skills to be successful in this fast-paced internet age. One hopes that more events such as ***Raising the Song*** can tap the talented musicians who desire to get people singing again."

Alice hopes to continue a similar venture on her own, training people in song leading. Plans are underway to schedule sessions in New York City. Watch future newsletters for details.

The organizers of ***Raising the Song*** are grateful for grants from Melodious Accord, Virginia Theological Seminary, and the Calvin Institute, that made ***Raising the Song*** possible.

-- Bill Roberts and Marilyn Haskel, co-chairs

MEET THE BOARD

Michèle Eaton has enjoyed a varied career as a singer, ranging from Gregorian chant to contemporary a cappella jazz. She became acquainted with the music of Alice Parker through her choral singing in New York City, and she is proud to serve on the Board of Directors of Melodious Accord.



In addition to her choral work, she is active as a concert soloist and small ensemble singer. She has toured the globe with Philip Glass in performances of his iconic opera, *Einstein on the Beach*, and can be heard on recordings of the premiere ensemble Pomerium, and on the sound track for the film *Dead Man Walking*. She even took on the boy soprano role of the Child Grendel in Julie Taymor's production of the opera *Grendel*, composed by Elliott Goldenthal.

Besides her work as a singer, Michèle is an Enrolled Agent, licensed to represent taxpayers before the IRS. She has been in the tax preparation and representation business since 2011, and serves a diverse clientele of musicians, clergy, physicians, mechanics and artists, among others.

When she isn't singing or working on taxes, she can be found gardening or visiting her two grandchildren. She lives with her husband, Mark Burns, in New Rochelle, New York.

[Michèle previously served as Secretary on the Melodious Accord board and now holds the position of Treasurer.]

EDITORIAL



LIBBY LARSEN, CAROL BARNETT, YSAYE BARNWELL, ALICE PARKER AND PHILIP BRUNELLE AT THE PREMIERE OF QUILT SONGS

QUILT SONGS

Who would ever think of inviting five women composers to join in writing a suite of choral songs based on quilt patterns? Philip Brunelle, that's who, and with quite remarkable results. Let's go back to the beginnings of this story...

Kay McCarthy of Minneapolis makes stunning original and traditional quilts -- hundreds of them, over the years. We knew about them through Chorus America Auctions, where they were a prized offering. Her husband, Mike, celebrated her birthday a few years ago by organizing a display of quilts with a full-color catalog picturing and giving details about each one shown. I loved it, and kept it where I could often turn its pages to admire the creative designs.

Then last year, Philip phoned and said he and Mike had this idea of honoring another of Kay's birthdays with music. Five women would each choose a quilt, find a poem on the same theme, and compose a work for a cappella chorus, to be performed at a concert honoring Kay. That took place last October, to everyone's great pleasure. Hearing the works performed in close proximity, I was struck by how well the suite hung together, as if we had all consulted about the musical and poetic materials, and worked to achieve a unified product. But the only consultation was the clearing of the quilt/poem pairing with the sponsors.

Carol Barnett, Ysaye Barnwell, Gabriela Lena Frank, Libby Larsen and I contributed our music to this 'quilt'. Philip arranged them in concert order: mine first, *This is the garden* (e e cummings), followed by Libby's *The Children's Orchard* (Muriel Rukeyser), Gabriela's haunting *Sun Quilt* (Laura Coates Reed), Ysaye's humorous *Nearly Insane* (Mary Moore Easter), and ending with Carol's evocative *Most Holy Night* (Hilaire Belloc). Listening, it seemed that we had all partaken of the same spirit, listened to the same muse as we worked in our separate studios.

What is this style? Let me try to characterize it. It is lyric chamber music, neither tonal nor modal but rather both. The poems are loved and honored, speaking easily through the vocal lines. It is melodic and contrapuntal, rather than harmonic in texture. The harmonies result from the combining of melodic lines, rather than dominating in traditional patterns or experimenting with new sounds. The songs communicate directly with the listener, moving easily among the patterns of the past five centuries of western vocal music. It evokes many moods from quiet to stormy, but avoids extremes. It is nurturing music, uniting composer, performer and listener in a common response (in this case) to visual beauty. Thus it builds community, binding together artists in different disciplines to celebrate this world in which we 'live and move and have our being'.

I can't give a name to this style. What is new is this easy common vision, after a century of wild experimentation in musical languages. It is old at the same time in its familiarity with past idioms and its merging of words and music to a single goal.

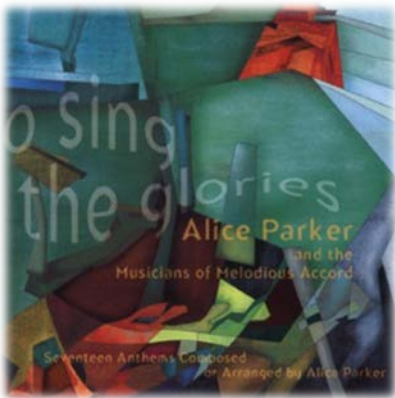
Certainly it is closer to Renaissance composers than those of the Classic or Romantic eras. Just as quilts are a 'homely' art, being at the same time decorative and useful, perhaps this is the new 'Gebrauchsmusik' -- meant to be enjoyed on many levels, never losing sight of its basic 'usefulness' -- music to be sung and listened to. At any rate, I'm honored to be part of it, and to have discovered such wonderful colleagues as Libby, Gabriela, Ysaye and Carol. We can all join in heartfelt thanks to Kay for inspiring it, and Mike and Philip for bringing it into being.

-- Alice Parker

[Kay McCarthy recorded a lovely video invitation to the premiere of Quilt Songs, which includes a glimpse of each of the quilts featured. To watch it, click [here](#).]

SHOP WINDOW

O SING THE GLORIES



O Sing the Glories is a collection of anthems composed and arranged by Alice Parker over the past twenty-five years. Written on commissions from churches large and small, they celebrate many occasions in the church year. Organ and trumpet sound grandly in *Bryn Calfaria* and *Darwall's 148*. A child-like simplicity enlivens *Lake Enon* and *Gott ist die Liebe*. New tunes adorn Carl P. Daw's *God of Grace and God of Laughter*, Isaiah 51's *Look unto Abraham your father*, and Psalm 100's *Know that the Lord is God*. This is a great Christmas gift for the church-music lover on your list: seventeen anthems of vintage Parker!

Click on the cover photo above to order your copy now, and visit the [Melodious Accord Store](#) to see all the recordings and publications that are available.

WHAT'S NEW

ON BEING WITH KRISTA TIPPETT

Alice had a delightful conversation with the host of *On Being* last month in Minneapolis. Their discussion ranged from composing to motherhood, from theology to peace to cooking. No world problems were solved, but it became clear that a meaningful life includes the arts, multi-generational friendships, and a commitment to both small and large communities.

In response to hearing the interview, Philip Brunelle wrote: "In these tumultuous times when bringing people together is more important than ever, what a joy to hear Alice Parker share with Krista Tippett her thoughts on singing! I urge everyone to find 51 quiet minutes to listen to this wise woman tell us about the importance of joining together in song. Her enthusiasm for the voice and what it can mean to every person makes this interview priceless!"

The program was broadcast this past weekend (December 8-11, 2016). In case you missed it on your local public radio station, here is an online link to the interview, which is titled [Singing Is the Most Companionable of Arts](#).

FOUR PREMIERES

In an unexpected concentration of creativity, Alice heard the first performances of four new pieces this fall. I've written about *This is the garden* in the Editorial of this issue. The week following that performance, the Cantate Chamber Singers conducted by Gisele Becker performed six songs for chorus, oboe and bassoon entitled *Emily's Perennial Things*. Emily Dickinson's poems are a continual magnet for Alice's muse, and these poems display both her humor and deft play with words as she considers the changing seasons.

Also in October, a newly formed chorus in Rockford, MI performed a fanfare, *We Are a Chorus*, written for their first concert. And in December the Concert Choir of Lafayette College in Easton, PA presented *Come Unto These Yellow Sands*, for mixed chorus and vibraphone. The poem, *Ariel's Song* from The Tempest, was chosen to honor the Shakespeare 400th anniversary.

AND THREE WORKSHOPS

For the first time, Alice joined John and Lili Feierabend at the Second Annual Conference of the Association for Music Education. This gathering of teachers gave her a warm welcome, and was ready to hear her message of returning to teaching by ear, and encouraging improvisation at all levels.

A July week in Missouri held many pleasures for Alice: working with an excellent choir conducted by Cameron LaBarr, leading an enthusiastic SING at the MCDA meeting in Jefferson City, and working with two photographers to create a file of 'working' images. It was fun to sing Shenandoah on the banks of the 'wide Missouri'.

An even busier week in Glen Ellyn, IL found her leading several SINGS at area churches and high schools, culminating in a sold-out program at The College of DuPage. In each of these places she enjoyed meeting new friends, renewing old ties, and engaging in 'shop talk' with composers and conductors and people working at every level in school and church music.

-- Alice Parker

MELODIOUS ACCORD FELLOWS PROGRAMS

COMING UP IN JANUARY - SCORE STUDY IN NEW YORK

Three days of intensive study in a small group with Alice Parker? It exists, is called *Score Study in New York City*, and takes place January 16-18, 2017, at St. Ignatius Church on Park Avenue. The focus is on interpreting the marks on the page of our legacy of printed music -- how to 'read' the score. The major work this year will be the well-loved Brahms Requiem, supplemented by some of Alice's own compositions, as well as selected pages from The Melodious Accord Hymnal. The aim is to bring the music to vibrant life, to reconstruct the composer's process so that the core 'song' reaches the listener's ear. Alice includes her own work because she is there to answer the question "What does that mark mean?" You can ask her yourself! Contact kay@melodiousaccord.org for information about registration.

For more information on Melodious Accord Fellows programs, click [here](#).

REPORT - A WEEK IN CHAUTAUQUA

Kay, Marilyn and Alice drove the length of the New York State Thruway to spend five days at this renowned community. The narrow lanes of the lakeside village are lined with charming Victorian houses. Automobiles are banned, so life moves at a walking pace. There is time for lectures on every subject, long talks on verandas and at least one stroll a day to the village center for an ice-cream cone. Alice led classes on composing and arranging as well as a SING involving two thousand people at the huge amphitheater. Those folks surely loved singing the hymns that had echoed there for the past hundred and fifty years.



ALICE LEADS A SING AT CHAUTAUQUA

The film Robert Shaw: Man of Many Voices received two sold-out presentations during our visit. Executive producer Kiki Wilson and Alice fielded questions after each showing, and people were bowled over by the story and the gorgeous music-making that compose the film. Find out about the possibility of showing it in your community through the website www.robertshawthefilm.com.

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 online (go to <http://melodiousaccord.org/contribute> and click on the Donate button), or you can mail a check to our office in New York.

CORRESPONDENCE

A REVIEW OF OUR NEW RECORDING:

In the *Autumn 2016* issue of **The Hymn** there is an enthusiastic article about *Where Heart and Heaven Meet*. Reviewer Crystal Jonkman concludes: This recording is an essential resource for studying and teaching the represented hymns. It is also a great resource tool for planning when and how to use these hymns for both congregational singing and concerts. . . *Where Heart and Heaven Meet*, together with *The Melodious Accord Hymnal*, is very highly recommended!

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

We also love to receive programs or other notification about performances of Alice's works -- often we don't know about them until you tell us. Please make sure to include the title, name of performing group, date and venue (location). If you cannot find copies of Alice's music, please let us know: we'll be glad to hunt them down for you.

CONTACT US

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FOLLOW MELODIOUS ACCORD ONLINE

Please visit Melodious Accord online to stay current with Alice's new publications, photos and videos, and information about upcoming workshops and projects. For those on Facebook and Twitter, please 'like' and follow our new pages.

Website: www.melodiousaccord.org
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/melodiousaccord>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/melodiousaccord>

CALENDAR

FOLLOW ALICE PARKER ON THE MOVE

2017

Jan	14	Melodious Accord Board Meeting	New York, NY
	15	Annual Spirituals SING at Cathedral of St. John the Divine	New York, NY
	16-18	Score Study: Brahms Requiem at St. Ignatius Church	New York, NY
Mar	8-11	ACDA Conference	Minneapolis, MN
	25-26	Bedford Presbyterian Church	Bedford, NH
May	6	Melodious Accord Board Meeting	New York, NY
	25-27	Smith College '47 Reunion	Northampton, MA
Jun	4	Shape Note SING	Hawley, MA
	21-24	Chorus America Conference	Los Angeles, CA

For information about any of these events, write to kay@melodiousaccord.org, or call 413-536-1753.

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