

Welcome to the Fall 2018 Melodious Accord E-Newsletter!

This print version was adapted from the e-newsletter distributed on October 31, 2018.

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



OCTOBER

The view from my window is golden. The close curtain of green that has enclosed me all summer is loosening, and turning much brighter as all the old leaf patterns dissolve. On the few clear days that we've had it's lovely to see a whole branch release its freight and the fluttering descent of the leaves.

But it's been so wet! Inches of rain over the past month make the earth soggy underfoot, with puddles in every low spot. The brook has been roaring, going over all three spillways at the dam until Will finally opened the sluice and emptied it for the winter. Opposite my home, the water descends rapidly through a small gorge: I can tell by the sound how much water is flowing. There's a large rock in the center that usually divides the stream. On several recent days it was flowing over the whole surface, making quite a dam behind it, and spectacular (small scale!) white water coming over.

The road through the forest is being rebuilt, and every morning truckloads of gravel go by my house. Opening a road that has been closed for thirty years calls for a lot of work. First they have to clear the trees that have grown up around and through it. Then clear the ditches to the sides, and put in new culverts. There's a real break a couple of miles up where, in super-storm Irene, the brook cut right through the road. I can't see yet how they are solving that puzzle: the present culvert is higher than the road!

Signs of preparation for winter are all around us. Wood piles are stacked high, peaches and apples in rich harvest, roadside stands bright with pumpkins and gourds. I love all this Fall produce, and have a big pot of soup simmering on the back of the stove. Winter clothes come out from the back of the closet, and boots replace sneakers and flip-flops. Rakes will be put away after the leaves are somehow collected (there are always more), and the shovels come out of deep storage. The air is crisp when not soggy, the temperature hovering between the 40s and 60s, and the days get shorter. The sun hits my kitchen at 8:45 in the morning, and is gone by 4 in the afternoon. The first frost is predicted for this week. So, the earth continues turning and the seasons processing in spite of all the incessant verbiage released over the airwaves (like the leaves?) I'm grateful to feel somehow out of the fray in this beautiful spot, sympathizing with the oppressed, but shielded from the noise of battle. Long live the countryside!

-- Alice Parker

BOARD NOTES

In 2018, the Board made the decision to change our meeting schedule, eliminating our spring meeting, and extending the length of our meetings in September and January to three hours. This both allows us more time for strategic planning, and makes full participation easier for those members who travel to meetings from afar. Our first three-hour meeting was held in September, and it was a great success – the meeting was both more relaxed and more productive.

We had a lively discussion of where the future of Melodious Accord lies. We discussed the uniqueness of Alice's melody-based approach as compared to others who are actively involved in the "community through singing" movement. Alice challenged the notion that only she can do what she does in SINGS; she hopes that Song Leading will eventually be recognized as a discipline in the conducting family of arts and crafts. We came to the decision that Melodious Accord would commit to promoting song leading as it has been taught and modeled by Alice for lo these many years.

As I write this letter, Alice is concluding a three-day song leading event in Missouri in conjunction with our Board member, Paul Vasile, to be able to help people interested in ALL types of choral singing to be empowered to bring to their own communities and groups the music and songs each of us know and love and not feel constrained to the page music is printed on, but guided by what we hear and feel. This has been Alice's

message for decades, and is supported by many others in the choral conducting field, including Paul, but which can't be over-emphasized or supported enough.

Today, after more than 33 years, Alice and we are still planning for the years ahead to continue with our own "SING" programs, seminars, and workshops, as well as collaborations with and support for other organizations and persons who share in Melodious Accord's vision and goals. In order to continue to do that, we once again ask for your help and financial support, with a reminder that year-end is nearly upon us. Please reach down and consider giving to Melodious Accord – every dollar helps us reach the musical world more fully. Donations are accepted online or through the mail - click on the Donate button just below, or scroll down to <u>Help Support Our Programs</u>.

Thank you for your long-standing interest and support. Alice, the Board and I are glad to wish everyone a very happy, healthy, productive and wonderfully musical holiday season.

-- John Lundsten, Chair

MEET THE BOARD



PAMELA WARRICK-SMITH

Pamela Warrick-Smith joined the Melodious Accord Board in 1990 and continued to serve for the following 28 years. She passed away on April 25, 2018.

Pamela Warrick-Smith, contralto, was a native of Detroit, Michigan. She appeared on opera and concert stages through the United States, Europe, the Far East and West Africa, including solo appearances with the San Francisco Symphony and members of the Grateful Dead in San Francisco, and Music Before 1800, The Alliance for American Song, and Musica Sacra, all in New York. Her varied operatic roles include Vera Boronel in Gian-Carlo Menotti's **The Consul**, Mamma Lucia in Pietro Mascagni's **Cavalleria Rusticana** and Ba'al Shem in Stuart Wallace's **Kabbalah**. She made her New York Metropolitan Opera debut as Schwertleite in Richard Wagner's **Die Walküre**.

Ms. Warrick-Smith received critical acclaim as a performer of folk and popular music, and worked extensively in cabaret, theater, radio, television and recording. She took part in the Radio City Music Hall production of **Porgy and Bess** on Broadway, and has made several appearances as a soloist at Carnegie Hall with such artists as Pete Seeger and Peter, Paul and Mary. She gave two solo concerts at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Germany, and was featured several times on Garrison Keillor's **American Radio Show**. She is a winner of <u>Backstage</u>'s Bistro Award as an outstanding vocalist in cabaret.

Ms. Warrick-Smith toured as a member and soloist with such groups as the Gregg Smith Singers, the Norman Luboff Choir, the Robert DeCormier Singers, and the Musicians of Melodious Accord. She sang on recordings with The Dusing Singers, John Bell of the Iona Community, and Bobby McFerrin. Her own recordings include **Work, Fight and Pray** on Greenhays Recordings, and **Flowers of Joy, Take Me to the Water** with Alice Parker, and **One Heart** with Donna Peña and Theresa Donohoo, all released by GIA Publications. Ms. Warrick-Smith was also a published arranger and composer.





REMEMBERING PAM

I met Pam first in 1988 at a Melodious Accord SING at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. We became fast friends, working together on several CDs. The Musicians of Melodious Accord joined in her 1994 CD **Flowers of Joy**. She sang solos on my 1988 recording **Spiritual Songs**, and the 1998 **King and the Duke**. Our 1994 CD **Take me to the Water** was written for her: our mutual affection was clear in the cover photo. And the solo cantata *Listen, Lord*, to words from *God's Trombone* by James Weldon Johnson, was composed just for her in 2014.

She led Spirituals with me every year in our Martin Luther King Jr. SING in New York City. Standing beside Pam as she led a Spiritual was a memorable experience. Hearing that rich voice pouring out, the urgent beat of her rhythms, the loving shaping of the text, the overwhelming message: she was a force of nature. People were immediately caught by her conviction, and shared her mastery. They <u>all</u> sang with her. I heard her sing chaingang songs in cabaret performances, completely persuasive in her baritone rendition of *Black Betty* or *Jody* or *Rainbow 'Round my Shoulder*.

That fabulous three and a half octave range was a joy to experience. When we were about to record *Don't Be Weary, Traveler,* she asked me "Do you want it up or down?" When I answered "Down", we heard, in her resonant tenor voice, a low D at the end. She was also completely convincing in ballads like *Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier* and Jean Ritchie's *In the Cool of the Day.*

She served actively on the Board of Melodious Accord, and participated in all our discussions about programming and philosophy and AGMA matters. We shall miss her honesty, her intelligence, her humor and her zest for living -- all of which sustained her and us through those twenty years of her declining health. She carried that six-foot staff through New York streets and subways like an Old Testament prophet: no one would mess with our Pam!

Of course we always ended with *We Shall Overcome*, she in a key about a fifth below anything comfortable for the rest of us. She did triumphantly overcome: still herself when her body was just a wisp of itself, and she could almost not take breath to speak. Each time we sing together now we sing with and for her: overcoming, unafraid, living in peace. May she rest in that peace, and keep singing in glory.

--Alice Parker

I met Pamela 48 years ago when we sang in a choir of eight professional singers at Mariners Episcopal Church in Detroit. During that time we sang together in several other outstanding choruses in the Detroit area and, eventually, in the University of Michigan Chamber Choir under Thomas Hilbish. We both came to New York in 1980; I came in June and Pamela arrived in October. Here in New York we sang in many choruses together but, occasionally, I stopped to take a breath while Pamela sang on and on for practically everybody, everywhere.

Pamela was always fun to be with and we shared many things in common. Some of them were reading and writing poetry, science fiction, and listening to all kinds of instrumental sounds. And, of course, vocal music; spirituals, blues, and early music. Wherever there was a glorious gathering of lutes, sackbuts and krummhorns, Pamela was ready to go. Sometimes we were the only "chocolate chips" in the cookie. And we both enjoyed good food and drink. It's no surprise that "Babette's Feast" was our shared choice for a favorite movie.

My friendship with Pamela was like no other I have ever had. To me she was always Lady Pamela, a title she had earned. Her cheerful greeting to me was always a smiling "Hey, chuckie wuckie". My response might be "Hello, you little chocolate dumpling". It sounds corny here but it was "our" moment and it always sparked from her a delighted giggle. I miss her very much, but I'm not sad about it. I keep remembering the final verse of the poem she wrote celebrating her twenty years as a cancer survivor, Pamela's 20th Anniversary Poem:

So now comes in another spring,
And still I find new songs to sing.
So share my joyfulness of heart
And a good wish send ere you depart:
Rejoice! Rejoice!
And again I say, Rejoice!



Rest In Peace, Lady P.

--Charles Brown

I first encountered the amazing voice of Pamela Warrick-Smith in 1991, when I was studying in New York with Alice. Melodious Accord was premiering a new work by Alice in honor of Martin Luther King, Listen, Lord, featuring Pam as soloist. If memory serves I was pressed into service as a rehearsal accompanist in an early session, giving me the chance to hear Pam before the performance.

When Pam opened her mouth a tsunami of rich, gorgeous sound poured forth, moving from octave to octave as if there were no limits to her range. She sang with passion, with insight, with artistry, and those who heard her at that concert were in her thrall. She captivated us all. When Pam was scheduled to sing for a major Roman Catholic gathering in Southern California, where I then lived, we connected for a visit, and I had the chance to get to know Pam better personally, and what I discovered was that she was, as a person, as lovely as her voice.

Rest in peace, friend and colleague. Earth is a poorer place for your absence, and heaven the richer.

--Bill Roberts



When I think of Pam I remember her warm welcoming smile when we visited her at the hospital; her positive attitude and patience when confronting difficult health issues; her energy singing work songs at the Cathedral; her phenomenal vocal range and her ability to involve the audience in song. And of course, the regal staff she carried with her always. I have been fortunate to know this special lady these past 18 years. --Kay Holt

Pamela Warwick Smith was one of the most generous and courageous souls I have ever known. The beauty of her voice and her fine musicianship were second only to the light that shone from within her. Whether leading a singalong of spirituals with Alice, soloing or singing in a professional ensemble, she brought joy to all. Her tireless work as an AGMA representative was undertaken at substantial personal sacrifice, but has been benefitted all of her colleagues. She will be greatly missed. -- Ellen Taylor Sisson

SHOP WINDOW

The store is open again! Do check out the new set-up and consider purchasing some holiday gifts!



PAMELA WARRICK-SMITH CD PACKAGE

These three Melodious Accord recordings feature Pamela Warrick-Smith as soloist. For those who would like to continue enjoying Pamela's beautiful voice in performances of Alice's music, we offer a three for the price of two package. Read on for Alice's description of each recording.

Three Albums with Pam

I love the cover of **Take Me to the Water** – it shows Pam and me rejoicing in our friendship and the sunshine of Riverside Park. We had met and worked together since 1988, but this was our first joint venture into recording. The arrangements were made for Pam: she is the soloist in almost every title. At the height of her powers, she had a vocal range from low E to more than two octaves higher: a brilliant mezzo on top, and almost baritone on the bottom. When I presented her with a setting, she would sometimes ask "Which octave do you want it in?" Enjoy her virtuosic singing all the emotional journey from *Don't Be Weary, Traveler* to *Who'll be a Witness*.

King and the Duke came only three years later, after a concert at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City. The King is of course Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., honored in this cantata based on his words (spoken here by Robert Shaw) and the spirituals which were continually evoked in his life. Here Pam is contralto soloist in *My Feets is Tired*, and Ellington's iconic *Come Sunday*. The very real tiredness expressed in the voice is caused by the cancer against which she fought for the rest of her life. I find it heartbreaking to listen to now.

The title **Listen, Lord** is taken from a wonderful poem by James Weldon Johnson entitled *God's Trombones*, a tribute to unlettered but inspired black preachers. In this cantata, Pam's role is that of the spokesperson, often a woman, who prepared the congregation for the Word. It's a demanding solo which Pam projects with communicative authority. The CD is completed with a selection of Spirituals that I had set over a period of some twenty years, including *Tell 'em I'm Gone*. It closes with the light-hearted *Street Corner Spirituals*, set for trumpet, drums, keyboard and 'Salvation Army' chorus.

Visit the Melodious Accord Store at https://www.melodiousaccord.org/shop to see all the recordings and publications that are available.

EDITORIAL

Two Roads Diverged

From 1947, when I graduated from college, until 1967, when Robert Shaw moved to Atlanta, GA to become conductor of the orchestra there, we worked together on a series of choral arrangements which have proved astonishingly durable. These were created for recordings by the Robert Shaw Chorale: not concert fare, but to feed a demand from the public which had bought his first **Christmas Hymns and Carols** (1945?) in great numbers.

He was the teacher, I the student. He was already a seasoned performer with a large following, and enormous ambitions. I had majored in composition at college, but while there I was not encouraged to work with the tunes in my head; rather, I was told that tonality was out and I must write "new" music: atonal, random and academic. I realized I could not continue in that field without damage to my mental health. So I changed to choral conducting, and enrolled at the Juilliard School to work with him and with Julius Herford. Those were heady years, filled with the electricity that surrounded Shaw, and his endless demands on those who surrounded him.

As a surprising by-product of this shift into conducting, I got an education in practical composition that was totally different from what I had received at college. Respect the singer, respect the text, honor the original tune, derive a setting for it that allows it to flourish rather than sinking under a mass of fashionable flora. The piece had to work: "Where do you breathe? Where is the climax? Is the texture varied? Is the heart of the song nurtured?" This was the opposite of the intellectual approach that I had been taught. It was surrender to the song, looking within it for the materials of the setting. Shaw was able to teach this partly because he had a love for singers and songs which immediately captivated the listener, and the skill as a performer to make it happen. Our collaboration lasted twenty years because we were very opposite in approach (he more rational, I more intuitive), and because our discussions (and the results) were musically revealing to us both.

When he moved on to the orchestral field (which he had been studying all those same years), I was just beginning to see myself as a composer, able to use all the tools he had given me, and newly able to honor my own love for traditional melodies, and to ignore the pressures to write 'new' music. I was also teaching piano and children's classes, where I gained a new respect for tonality (it was far from dead) and for the kind of melodic, intuitive music to which all of my students responded.

I began teaching choral arranging (students wanted to write a Parker/Shaw arrangement) and realizing how many things they needed to know before they wrote one single note. They would sing a song "correct to the page", as if they were giving dictation to a beginner. (There was no music in it.) They wanted to write four-part harmony without ever having the discipline of working with two parts. They wanted to write piano accompaniments without having played the piano. It took me years to realize that my first job was to teach them to sing a folk song "correct to the song", with the kind of loving attention that made me want to listen to it. Next would come improvisation: "Can you sing an *ad lib* response to that tune that supports it, that honors it, without interrupting it?" And finally would come the written wisp of a two-part setting: "Is what you wrote here the same as what you sang yesterday? Why not?" The page for them became a paper tiger, demanding to be filled up with notes, rather than being the record of a musical conversation. *The fewer notes, the better. No note without first singing in the head.*

Shaw, meanwhile, moved into a world dominated by instrumentalists who had spent most of their lives from childhood on linked to their mastery of an instrument. They depended on the page to tell them what to play. Shaw became a connoisseur of notation: which mark to put where, for what effect. His scores are widely studied as examples of musicianship and profound detail. The great works of the past had come down to us confined in these symbols, and his respect for the music hinged onto the careful reconstruction of the buildings they charted. He kept studying and performing until his mastery of the orchestra matched that of the chorus -- and the resultant performances and recordings of these giant works stand as proof of his success.

I was going in the opposite direction: away from complexity into simplicity. Away from intellectual challenge into lyrical simplicity. Away from a huge orchestral sound into a single human voice. Working mostly with singers who grew up in cheerful sociability, with only a tangential connection to the page. How could I teach them what was a good melody? How did one notate it (as simply as possible) and respond to it (within its own perimeters)? How could I transmit "sound knowledge" to a new generation, asking them to leave behind intellectual questioning and simply *hear* what the song had to say?

Shaw's path and mine converged again as we neared the end of our lives. He came back to choral music after he retired, and I wrote chamber music that united voices and instruments. He made wonderful music, and I tried to do the same. There are many paths to artistic fulfillment, and each of us can only follow our own road through that "yellow wood". But I wouldn't want to change any part of that journey which brought me to the understanding that true folk song is the soil from which all music develops. It comes from one human heart and voice, singing to another.

-- Alice Parker

* Robert Frost: The Road Not Taken

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

WHAT'S NEW

NOTICE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- Christmas Carol SING
 - o Sunday, December 30 at 3:00 PM in the Federated Church in Charlemont, MA
- ❖ Spirituals SING
 - Sunday, January 20, 2019 at 2:00 PM on in St. James Chapel at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City.
- Score Study
 - Monday-Wednesday, January 21-23, 2019 in New York City. See description under Fellows Programs just below.

MELODIOUS ACCORD FELLOWS PROGRAMS

Score Study in New York, January 2019

Beginning on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, this seminar includes three days of intensive Score Study in Manhattan for conductors, church and school musicians, singers, organists, students, and lovers of song. Alice shares her experience with many styles of music, and discusses how a piece of music develops from the composer's intention to the written page, focusing on a different set of scores each year.

This year's main focus is Bach's **B Minor Mass**. Alice's **This is the garden**, **The Day Begins**, **Wings of the Morning** and **Come**, **O Thou Traveler** will also be studied, along with selections from the **Melodious Accord Hymnal**.

For more information and to apply, click on the Score Study 2019 button below or send an email to kay@melodiousaccord.org.

SEMINARS IN HAWLEY

If you want to participate in intensive study for three days at Alice's home, let us know! Send your contact information, educational and professional experience, and possible dates that would work for you. What topic do you want to focus on (melody studies, song leading, composing, teaching. etc.)? All the sessions have at their core the study of Melody: the union of words and music. Participants find their ears newly opened, and their understanding of the choral art enriched.

For more information, or to arrange a seminar, email Kay Holt at kay@melodiousaccord.org, or call 413-536-1753.

REPORT - SIX SEMINARS

Six times this year, composers, conductors, teachers, church musicians and eager students gathered for three-day sessions of 'shop talk'. Alice hosted most of these classes at her home in western Massachusetts, offering warm hospitality as well as the beauty of the New England countryside.

In March, five students and one faculty member from Missouri State University studied Melody. Small groups of composers met in both April and October, sharing their work and discussing their craft. Four composer-conductors met in July, and five choral conductors from Temple University met in April in Philadelphia to grapple with song leading and composition.



CORRESPONDENCE

FEEDBACK FROM SEMINAR ATTENDEES

I LOVED my time with Alice! It seems whether I am learning classical piano music or original choral music with lyrics, always now I am looking for the composer's intention, the feel, etc. Old habits can swoop right back in when I'm starting a new piece, but sheet music will never look the same to me, or hold any power over me, as it once did! It really does free you to be alive with **the music** and know it in a way that goes beyond following the rules. Or another way to say that - it frees you to have a direct relationship with the music without the "go-between" (which is what sheet music is).

I learned much about sound and how to imagine who is singing, for what occasion, and where a piece would be performed before writing anything down. Another thing that stuck with me was how to honor melodies when arranging and singing. Alice reaches in and draws out the essence of music, which is a refreshing experience. The ideas and knowledge she imparts ... challenges how you view music, and opens you to new facets ... A spectacular experience!

I loved the hymnal times and looked forward to them very much. I have enjoyed working through the hymnal since the seminar and look forward to using it in my work. (I have already had 4th graders playing parts of it on the recorder.)

Simplicity, melody as basis of arrangement, passion and playfulness. Alice is the complete package. She brings together a mastery of song leading, composition, playfulness, precision. She has lived this music! Just hearing it was terrific.

Love the text, and let it lead you to the melody. Let go of the page, the black dots. Principle of accumulation. Leading a song is the connection between conducting and non-musicians. Incredibly inspiring and informative.

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:

Alice Parker Programs

Melodious Accord

96 Middle Road

Hawley, MA 01339

- or scan it and send via email to 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.

CALENDAR

FOLLOW ALICE PARKER ON THE MOVE

Several seminars that are still in the planning stages do not appear on this calendar.

2018 - 2019

Oct	24-27	Sharing the Song Conference at Eden Seminary, with Paul Vasile	St Louis, MO
Nov	17-19	Goshen Community Chorus <i>Melodious Accord</i> perf.	Goshen, IN
Dec	20	Annual Carol SING, Federated Church	Charlemont, MA
Jan	19	MA Board Meeting	New York, NY
	20	MLK Spirituals SING	New York, NY
	21-23	Score Study: Bach, B minor Mass	New York, NY
Apr	30- May 2	Seminar with Temple Univ. graduate choral conductors	Philadelphia, PA
May	20	Concert and Workshop Missouri State U. Chamber Choir	Charlemont, MA
June	8	Greater Boston Choral Consortium (tent)	Boston, MA
	26-29	Chorus America Conference	Philadelphia, PA

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

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