

# Voices of Ascension Annual Report 2014–2015 Season

Dear Friends,

Thank you for helping us to celebrate our 25th Anniversary Season. Some of you have been part of our community since the very beginning, others are recent enthusiasts. We are all united by a common love of music and commitment to sustaining excellence in choral performance.

The Voices of Ascension Concert Series consistently presents exceptional performances of great works of music for chorus and orchestra. Through the Young Artists initiative, VoA creates performance opportunities for emerging solo artists to work with our gifted ensemble. The VoA Conductor Academy provides opportunities for selected conductors to work in a concentrated master class setting with Dennis Keene and VoA Chorus and Orchestra.

These three programs establish VoA as a leader among professional choral ensembles. We bring thrilling and varied music to life for our audiences and serve as an incubator for the next generation of musical leaders.

Without you, we couldn't possibly create such a rich palate of musical offerings.

Thank you!

*Liz*

## *2014 2015 Season by the Numbers*

3,739 Concert Attendees

124 ensemble members

7 young artists

12 conducting fellows

50 volunteers

\$55,367 Gala contributions

\$715,971 FY15 Budget

## 25th Anniversary Silver Jubilee Benefit & Gala

We launched the celebratory season in November with our first-ever Gala and Benefit Concert. VoA musicians donated their services, with soloists Sarah Shafer, Devon Guthrie, Joseph Beutel, and organist Renee Louprette, all under the direction of Dennis Keene.



WQXR's

Elliott Forrest

introduced the festive program, and awarded conductor and composer Gregg Smith the inaugural Perrin Prize for lifetime achievement in the arts, followed by celebrations with patrons and musicians.



Top Right: Dennis Keene and the ensemble with Gregg Smith and Roz Reese  
Bottom Left: Board Secretary Roberta Huber with Marguerite Pitts

## New York Concert Series

How lucky we are to be in Greenwich Village, in residence at The Church of the Ascension, built in 1841, redesigned in 1885-89 by Stanford White, and restored in 2011 to house the remarkable Manton Memorial Organ by Pascal Quoirin. We enjoy one of the most acoustically and visually satisfying performance spaces in New York.

*“inspired”*

- New York Times (4/24/15)

*“richly colored, impressive, and beautifully balanced,”*

- Wall Street Journal (2/11/15)

This season saw sold out performances of the Faure Requiem and music of the Russian Orthodox Tradition as well as the Mozart Requiem and Coronation Mass, the perennial favorite Candlelight Christmas Concert, a Choral Celebration of VoA's greatest hits and a Renaissance concert curated by you - our audience! The season ended with a guest appearance in Philadelphia and a film soundtrack recording.



## Young Artists Program

In 2014-15, we welcomed sopranos Devon Guthrie, Pureum Jo and Sarah Shafer, mezzo-soprano Teresa Buchholz, tenor Joseph Dennis and basses Joseph Beutel and Evan Hughes - fresh from performances at the Santa Fe Opera, Juilliard Opera Center, and Dresden Opera. Watch for these emerging stars in opera and concert programs around the world!

## Voices of Ascension Conductor Academy

June 8-12 marked the inaugural VoA Conductor Academy. 12 conductors from across the country came to NYC for a week of intensive lessons and coaching with Dennis Keene and the ensemble.

Here are some comments from the conductors:

*“Life changing experience.”*

*“Working with such kind, talented people was such a joy. An incredible reminder of how exciting, passionate, and beautiful music-making can be.”*

*“I found the academy allowed me to discover where I needed to grow, and created opportunities for me to change.”*

*“It was fabulous. Dennis is the best! An exceptional teacher. Thank you for a great experience.”*

